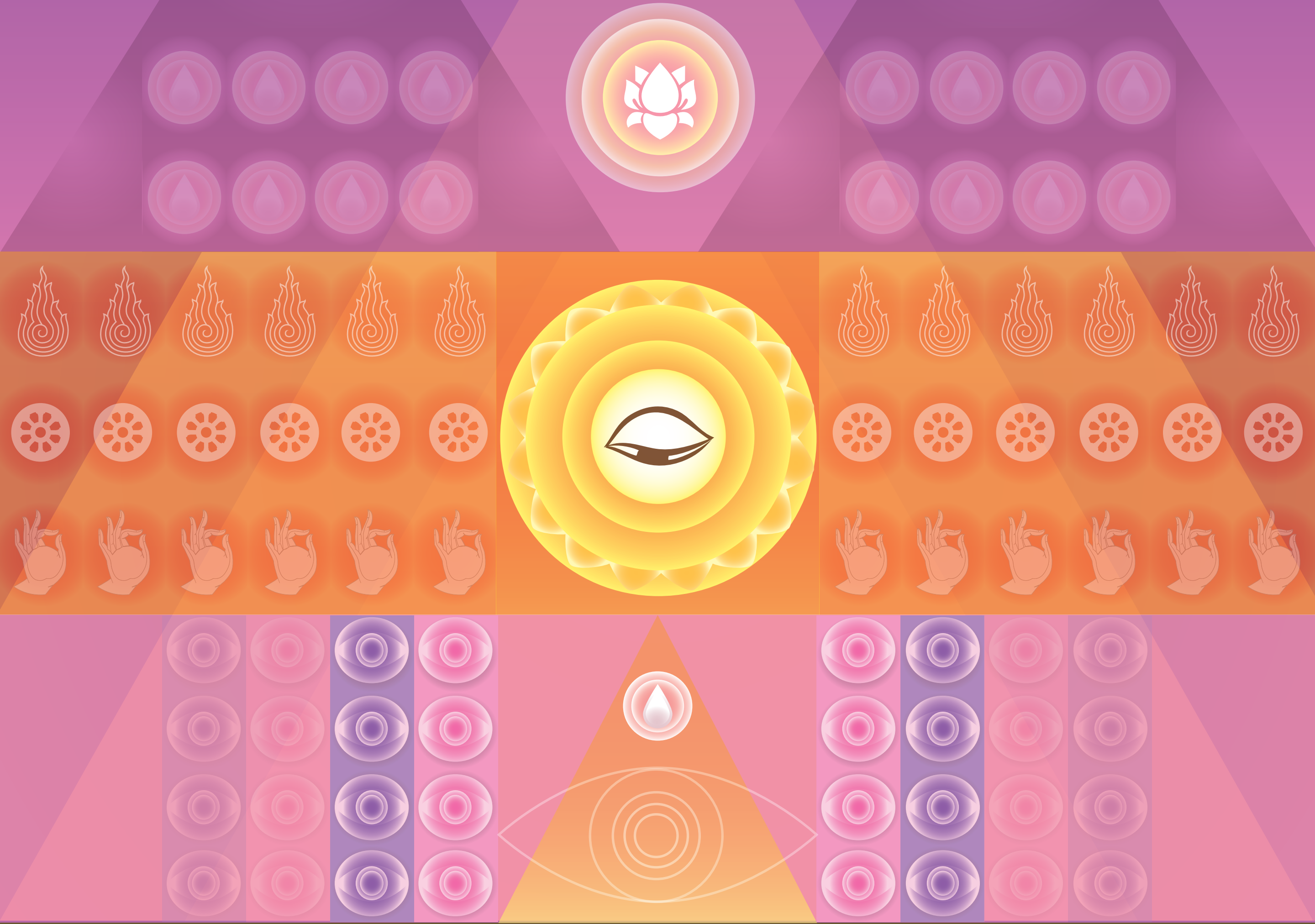
The International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU)

Unifying Buddhist Philosophical Views



Academic Papers presented at the 2nd IABU Conference

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Main Campus

Wang Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand

The International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU)

Unifying Buddhist Philosophical Views

Academic Papers presented at the 2nd IABU Conference
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Main Campus
Wang Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand

The International Association of Buddhist Universities

2012 IABU Editorial Committee:

Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami
Prof. Padmasiri de Silva
Prof. Sarah Shaw
Dr. Dion Peoples
Jamie Cresswell

Preface

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) has been privileged to witness and play an instrumental role in developing and hosting successful UNDV and IABU celebrations, annually. As always, we are all very grateful to the Royal Thai Government for its constant support, and thank the Thai Supreme Sangha Council for its blessings, guidance and support. We are indebted, also, to the United Nations for recognizing the thrice-sacred Buddhist holy day.

We had to delay the 2nd IABU Conference, due to the extreme flooding that shut down MCU for nearly two months. It has been 2600 years since the Enlightenment of our Great Teacher, and we have gathered here from across the globe, from many nations, to again pay tribute to his birth, enlightenment, and death – occurring on the same day in different years. The 2nd IABU Conference is running this year, due to the postponement, with the 9th United Nations Day of Vesak Conference. The IABU Secretariat now plays a major role in our celebrations, particularly in the academic program of the conference.

This publication could not have been possible without the persistence, hard work, and dedication of MCU's scholars and staff. I wish to thank all members of the International Council for The Day of Vesak and the Executive Council of the International Association of Buddhist Universities, and the other members of the Editorial Committee for their devotion. I am also grateful to our many donors, sponsors, and dedicated volunteers who return year after year to support the IABU and United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations.

We all truly celebrate the Buddha's Enlightenment, and hope these words reach the hearts and minds of the readers.

P.D. Kosajarn

The Most Ven. Prof. Dr. PhraDharmakosajarn

Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

President, ICDV & IABU

Contents

2nd IABU Conference: Introduction to the Unifying Buddhist Philosophical Views Volume

Welcome to the 2nd International Association of Buddhist Universities Academic Conference on Buddhist Philosophy and Praxis. This conference seems like it has been a long time in the making, due to the extensive flooding that ravished Thailand, and certainly left Mahachulalongkorn rajavidyalaya University, our gracious and great host, inundated with almost 2 meters of water. The university, where the IABU Secretariat is currently headquartered, has overcome this difficult situation, and we are now ready to hold this conference. The conference was originally scheduled for 16-18 December 2011, but to make this happen seemed like an impossibility. We are now here for the rescheduled date: 31 May – 02 June 2012. We have noticed that our 2nd IABU Conference coincides with the 9th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations – but our aims are different for this occasion. It's quite fascinating that a single university can host two large international conferences at the same time. We further give our humble respects to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and to the Thai Sangha Supreme Council for enabling this conference to proceed.

When this conference was in its planning stages, we had initial discussions on the main theme: Buddhist Philosophy – but we did not want papers that just gave idealistic proposals. Instead we aspired to gain papers that demonstrated philosophy in action, or the conversion of an idea into an actuality – and thus we wanted to implement or emphasize the aspect of praxis, into the conference. We had scheduled a practical meditation session, where elected Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana masters would hold a meditation session along with a question and answer period; but due to the merging of the two conferences: the 2ndIABU Conference and the 9th UNDV Conference – there was no longer enough allotted time for the meditation sessions, so it was regretfully eliminated. We hope that the gathering of academics took advantage of this expertise that availed themselves for this august gathering.

As all the scholars can surmise, there are several formats or applications of Buddhism, some are living-systems, and some have become either extinct or have merged with existing systems. Buddhist Philosophy is a vast topic that fills many bookshelves. Most of us have read texts on early-Indian or Vedic-philosophy and have seen the emergence into what we are discussing: Buddhism – but by no means are we holding a singular view of a Buddhism. The overwhelming amount of scholars present here surmise that dependent-origination is probably the supreme-teaching of the Buddha, or the one doctrine that gathers the most attention. The term: 'praxis' has caused some confusion amongst our scholars. If the term was defined: we could determine that praxis is the application or process through which the philosophical or doctrinal point becomes actualized or put into place (practiced) – it's about the endeavor. We might have taken the term from international-socialistic literature, which emphasizes that besides just having philosophy – the point of all of us studying the Buddha's preserved words is for the sake of improving our world – to eliminate suffering from the social experience. How have we actually done this?

Approximately 160 articles were received the 2nd IABU Conference from around the world. We have selected about 110 of them for presentation at the conference. There are articles from

different levels of scholars, ranging from the most senior of professors and on downward to undergraduates. Each of the articles have merits of interest within them. We decided on four programs (sub-themes). This is the volume for the session on Buddhist Psychotherapy.

PANEL SUMMARY - UNIFYING BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS:

Papers that were accepted into this panel session were to include advanced studies for searching the diverse Buddhist traditions and philosophical views (Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana) for possible common grounds. The suggested areas of research were to include one or more of the following: where are the connections, possibilities and/or methods to actualize the possibility of unifying them; any evidence of such endeavors; the role and the implications of such exercise for the advancement of Buddhist studies; and how university students can benefit from such conception or research. This session has twenty-three (23) presentations; 13 in the morning and 10 in the afternoon. The subjects discussed are profoundly philosophical, ethical and practical, and those related to engaged Buddhism. Each paper has its own viewpoint and contributes to the general theme of this session to search for common grounds for a possible unification of diverse Buddhist traditions and philosophical views.

Dr. Ronald Y. Nakasone in his paper "*Mapping the Ascent to Enlightenment*" discusses how one experiences the final stages of enlightenment experience by examining Gautama Buddha's own attainment of Enlightenment and Fazan (Fa-tsang法藏643-712), the Huayan (華厳) master, whose interpretation of the '*sāgaramudrā-samādhi*' is considered to be identical with the Enlightenment. He says that the mind plays a decisive role in the stages of enlightenment and draws the map to enlightenment in which to see two aspects: 'ego-vision to an expansive psycho-cosmic vision.'

Mr. Ofosu Jones-Quartey (Sumano), a Theravāda Buddhist practitioner and hip-hop artist, raises the vital question of reconciliation between the destruction of the desire, the root cause of suffering, and the very modern way of life as seen in America in his paper '*Skillful Means and the 21st Century Buddhist Artist*.' He relates his own personal experience of awakening and the realization as a Buddhist that true artistic activities can be of mundane nature, because the mundane path is just a skillful means to convey to the people the true meaning of the Dharma.

Dr. William Yaryan in his paper '*"Big tent" Buddhism: Searching for Common Ground Among Western and Asian "Buddhisms"*' traces and contrasts with concrete examples different traditions and interpretations existing even today among the accepted schools of Buddhism – Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna. The author proposes that while acknowledging the spirit of 'Buddhist modernism' that has produced remarkable adaptations in Asia and the West with two main extreme approaches, secular and soteriological, harmonization among 'Buddhists' may be achieved on the basis of family resemblance, communication, etc., despite their differences and polyphony.

Dr. Justin Whitaker's paper is '*The Ethical-Philosophical Unity of Buddhist Traditions*.' For the unification of various Buddhist traditions, he calls for an approach that does not fall into the propagation of rigid and pedantic comprehension of Buddhist philosophy. By citing historical anecdotes, he emphasizes the validity and importance of the fundamental ethical teachings of Buddhism such as '*sīla*' (morality) and '*pañcasīla*' (5 precepts) and argues that they can be the key for unifying different Buddhist traditions.

Ven. Dr. JinabodhiBhikkhu's presentation is '*Theravāda and Mahāyāna: Parallels, Connections and Unifying Concepts.*' He discusses in his paper the importance of relying upon and accepting the common grounds for the unification of Buddhist philosophical views among the two major Buddhist traditions, Theravāda and Mahāyāna, despite that there are different views between them. He reiterates that both the Mahayanists and the Theravadins uphold the basic principles of Buddhism such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the denial of the soul, the theory of karma, and the theory of *pratītya-samutpāda*. Such affinities are summarized under different headings, including the fulfillment of 'perfection' (*pāramitā*) and the concept of 'three marks of existence' (*trilakṣaṇa*).

Dr. ChaisitSuwanvarangkul's paper is '*Pratītyasamtpāda and Śūnyatā in Mādhyantavibhāga*.' He tries in his paper to find out how the terms *pratītyasamtpāda* and *śūnyatā* developed and changed over time and finally united into one truth. His main focus in this paper is on the reconstruction of the missing portions of Vasubandhu's*Mādhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* based on a Tibetan *ṭīkā*.

Christian Thomas Kohl discusses '*pratītyasamutpāda*,' the central teaching of Buddhism, as a unifying force for all Buddhist traditions in his paper '*Pratītyasamutpāda in Eastern and Western Modes of Thought.*' He argues that the separation between Theravāda and Mahāyana is misleading, and in fact no difference in the conceptual framework is seen even between quantum physics and Nāgārjuna's theory of '*pratītyasamutpāda*.' He emphasizes the existence of a parallel between Nāgārjuna's philosophical view of reality and the physical view of reality of quantum physics. He concludes that both deal with two-'body' systems or two entities which have bodies that are neither properly separate, nor properly joined together.

Dr. Bimalendra Kumar traces the relationship between '*hetu*' and '*paccaya*' in his paper '*Problem of Hetu&Paccaya in Abhidharma Philosophy*.' He argues that the problem of '*hetu-paccaya*' can be placed in later Abhidharma and commentarial texts. The Sarvāstivādins, he says, were the first to make a distinction between *hetu* and *pratyaya* in their theory of six *hetu*-s and four *pratyaya*-s. He also discusses a historical development of the relation and their interpretations by citing some modern works, but believes that the Theravādins did not differentiate '*hetu*' from '*paccaya*' as 'cause' and 'condition' in the Nikāya-s. Even the Sarvāstivādin understanding of *hetu-pratyaya* resembles the interpretation of *hetupaccaya* found in the Paṭṭhāna and its commentaries of Theravāda.

'*The Philosophical Links between "Anatta" and Vijñāṇ"*' by Ven. Dr. M. Dhammajothi focuses on the evolution of Buddhist philosophy from '*anatta*' to '*vijñāṇa*' and traces different interpretations of the central question of how concepts like '*anicca*' (impermanence), '*kamma*,' '*punabbhava*' (re-becoming) and 'memory' can be logically expounded without accepting the theory of 'substance or self' (*ātman*). The author examines various theories related to this question in different phases of development including the theories of '*śūnya*' and '*vijñāṇa*' of Mahāyāna exposition and believes that all these are after all based on early Buddhism.

Ven. Dr. ThichNhatTu in his paper '*Nature OfCitta, Mano And Viññāṇa*' discusses the different usages and connotations of the terms '*citta*,' '*mano*' and '*viññāṇa*', and his discussions extend to the 'eightfold division of consciousness' of the Yogācāra School of Buddhist thought. The author argues that some of the English translations for these terms are misleading and confusing and do not reflect their intricate connotations. He contends that *mano*attaches to the feeling of I, seeking cravings for sensuality (*kāmataṇhā*), for existence (*bhavataṇha*) and for non-existence

(*vibhavataṇha*); *viññāṇa* engages more in activities responsible for continual existence of beings in process of rebirth (*saṁsāra*), while *citta* is for mental training leading to the realization of *nibbāna*.

Dr. Dion Peoples discusses in his paper '*A Synchronistic Method of Higher Processes*' that the SaṅgītiSutta of the Dīgha-nikāya serves as a basis for itemization of Abhidhamma/Abhidharma systems. The author argues that a synchronistic approach to them can certainly benefit University students of Buddhist studies if they can perform this identification of unification or diversification of views in order to properly comprehend any trends that have developed historically. His contention comes from the strong belief and concrete evidence that there are many commonalities in various schools of Buddhism.

Dr. Mrs. ParineetaDeshpande's paper is '*Aśvaghoṣa and Nirvāṇa*' presented in collaboration with Prof. Mrs. K. Sankarnarayan. The authors bring out various interpretations of the notion of '*nirvāṇa*' as found in Aśvaghoṣa's*Saundarānanda* (1st century) and contend that Aśvaghoṣa was a philosopher who retained the conception of '*nirvāṇa*' expounded in the early Theravāda tradition and that by his brilliant exposition of the Buddha's teachings using the term '*upaniṣad*' he succeeded to synthesize philosophy of early Nikāya with the upcoming Sarvāstivāda besides Mahāyāna. They conclude that Aśvaghoṣa stressed the importance of ardent faith in the Buddha for which he employed the style that transcended the sectarian considerations.

Dr. DiptiMahanta discusses the application of 'deconstruction' to two different Buddhists in time and space in his presentation '*From Nāgārjuna to AjahnChah: Buddhist Deconstruction in Theory and Practice.*' Mahanta introduces the Buddhist notion of dependent origination and the doctrine of no-self and emptiness as a preliminary to his argument that long before Western philosophy came to deconstruct the epistemic category of 'self-presence' or 'self-identity' through the logic of Derrideandifférance, Buddhism recognized the fallacy inherent in the substantialist world-view, with its focus on self, and had successfully dismantled it through the principle of causality or dependent arising. The author argues that the Buddha deconstructed, in Derrida's sense, both Upaniṣadiceternalism and the varied forms of annihilationism advocated by other Indian schools. Exploring the implications of various levels of the middle way as enacted in Buddhist theory and practice, she suggests this deconstruction ranges from the social, in the rejection of caste-based hierarchy within the monastic orders, to the meditative and theoretical, in the understanding of dependent origination as a doctrine 'of the middle'. Discussing the methods of Nāgārjuna, she notes a systematic and comprehensive deconstruction in a theoretical sense, as various logical stances espoused even within the Buddhist tradition are subjected to exhaustive rationalist critique. Nāgārjuna championed, as she says, the task of wiping up the infiltration of new interpretations from different Buddhist schools like the *Sarvāstivādins* and the *Sautrāntikas*. She also finds that AjahnChah's emphasis on the '*dhutaṅga*' is the mode of practice that can be categorized as empirical deconstruction or deconstruction-in-praxis. On an experiential level, the author argues, the teacher AjahnChah adopted comparable techniques to deconstruct practitioners' perceptions of their own experience. Both emphasize non-substantiality as a means of leading to an understanding that is not, as so often wrongly assumed, inactive or passive. The logical propositions of Nāgārjuna demonstrate theoretical and linguistic sophistication, whereas the Dhamma talks of AjahnChah demonstrate down-to-earth profundity in practice that has arisen from moment-to-moment self-scrutiny and mindful practice of 'letting go'. Both approaches deconstruct with the intention of elucidation, a process achieved, the author argues, by the first through logic and by the second through rigorous challenge to the roots of greed, hatred and delusion as they arise in the mind.

Work on studying deconstruction in AjahnChah's teachings is also provided by Mahanta, who situates her argument in the context of the early history of Buddhism which, she argues, offers a thoroughly modern deconstruction of brahminism. She believes that the Buddha was the forerunner who adopted what she calls 'mega-deconstructionist mode of practice' deconstructed (dismantled) two extreme theories prevalent during his time namely, externalism (*sassata-diṭṭhi*) and annihilationism (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*).

Dr. Angela Dietrich's paper is '*The Roots of Interbeing: Buddhist Revival in Vietnam*.' The author traces the history of Buddhism in Vietnam with a focus on Buddhist modernization. In this respect she says that ThichNhatHanh (b. 1926) initiated the formation of UBCV (Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam) combining elements of eleven different sects and the Theravada and Mahayana streams of Buddhism. He contributed to its progress making this movement an excellent example in modern times. The master ThichNhatHanh tirelessly worked for UBCV, but also contributed to Buddhism in Vietnam in general. The freedom of religious worship is guaranteed in Vietnam, but Buddhist organizations must still conform to the government expectation. The author concludes that the development of various kinds of Buddhism –whether syncretistic or composite in nature, unified or not – is essentially a dynamic, ongoing process, which cannot be viewed in isolation from its socio-political context.

XiaofeiTu discusses in his paper '*Humanistic Buddhism: The 3.5th Yana?*' the socio-political circumstances under which the movement of humanistic Buddhism arose in China and contrasts it with its movement in Taiwan, where, the author says, there is more religious freedom than in China. The author acknowledges a subtle difference in connotation between 'humanistic Buddhism' and 'engaged Buddhism.' He accepts that 'engaged Buddhists' view human suffering in light of imperial dominance, genocide, systematic political violence, institutionalized economic exploitation, unjust allocation of social privileges, and criminal abuse and waste of natural resources that have been happening in our world, but also acknowledges some similar core beliefs. He finally concludes that 'engaged Buddhism' in China should be viewed as a response to the 20th century Chinese social and political changes and can be called a '4thyāna,' while 'humanistic Buddhism,' a movement in today's world, may be called a '3.5th*yāna*'.

Shi Jingpeng attempts to historically examine the Huiyuan's thought on 'triune vehicle' of Buddhism in his '*A Critical Study of Triune Vehicle of Mount LushanHuiyuan*.' The author believes that Huiyuan through a correspondence with Kumārajīva evolved his thought on a unifying force between Theravāda and Mahāyāna, though he accepted initially the existence of differences between them. He concludes that Huiyuan's continued effort for the unification of Buddhism was based on his understanding of '*dhyāna*' and '*prajñāpāramitā*'.

Dr. PallaviJambhale discusses epigraphic evidence to argue that the caves at Nasik were donated to *Cetiyaka* and cave of Kanheri to *Aparasaila* Sect of Buddhism (2nd century) in her paper '*Mention of Schools of Buddhism in Inscriptions of Deccan and Their Philosophical Influence – With Special Reference to Cetika or Cetiya School and Aparsaila or Aparseliya School*.' The author however believes that it is difficult to conclude that philosophical views influenced the cave architecture. She further comments that the existence of many different Buddhist schools in Deccan region in 2nd-3rd century A.D. proves the trend of unification among them in this period.

Dr. Hsiao-Lan Hu in his '*Dharmic Views and Dharmic Practices*' raises a few intriguing questions about the attitude among the Buddhists belonging to different affiliations. He observes and raises the concern that people who recognize only one form or tradition of Buddhism inevitably elevate one tradition at the expense of all other traditions. He then tries to show the folly of such an attitude by citing some literary quotes from the Pāli literature, which, he argues, has been accepted as the core of doctrinal developments even in later Buddhist schools and traditions. The message of the Buddha's Dhamma (Dharma) is none other than the cessation of '*dukkha*', which is synonymous with the attainment of *nibbāna*. The practice leading to its cessation is the Buddhist practice. He concludes that 'interdependent co-arising' is the rationale of all Buddhist teachings and any view that is not reasonable in light of 'interdependent co-arising' is not a *Dhammic* view.

Prof. Bina Gupta discusses the notion of '*ātman*' (self) and '*anātman*' (no-self) in her paper '*Ātman (Self) and Anātman (No-self): A Possible Reconciliation*'. She acknowledges the prevailing notion that the two traditions: self and no-self – are considered mutually incompatible. The author, discussing the western phenomenology advocated particularly by German philosopher Husserl, points out similarities between his philosophy and that of Śaṃkara'sAdvaitaVedānta. Both, she believes, were not to construct a philosophical system, but to show the path to the truth – Buddhism (Śaṃkara and the Buddha) concerns with eschatology while Husserl was also inspired by the idea of discovering the truth about our deeper selves, discovery of the true nature of consciousness as the highest practical purposes of life.

Dr. Donna M. Giancola demonstrates in her paper '*Buddhist Doctrines of Identity and Impermanence in the Western Mind*', how the substantial view of 'self' has been viewed by the western minds, and because of its very reason the understanding of co-relations among the Buddhist notion of 'three characteristic of existence' (*tilakkhaṇa*), particularly the last one, 'no-self', has been a daunting task in the western philosophy which has been evolving over the centuries based on Greek philosophy and Christian theology. The author thus discusses the difference between the western notions of substance and causality and the Buddhist notion of causal continuity. She also argues that the challenge for the westerners is to learn to think in terms of causal continuity rather that substantial causality.

Ricardo Sasaki, as a teacher and practitioner himself, discusses in his paper '*The DōgenZenji´s 'GakudōYōjin-shū' from a Theravada Perspective* that a new approach to understand one's own tradition comes from a comparative study. His comparative approach is between Zen (Soto Zen of Japan) and Theravāda Buddhism. He argues by giving some excerpts from the work 'GakudōYōjin-shū' by the Japanese Zen master Dogen (道元) of the 13th century that such terms as '*bodhicitta*', etc. have close links with Theravāda Buddhism. In his conclusion he emphasizes the benefits of such a comparative approach not only for students interested in the history of different schools but also for practitioners of different traditions, because it can have a stronger basis to understand each other, which may lead to collaboration towards a common aim.

Dr. Peter Grossenbacher, Kelly A. Graves and Daphne M. Davis in their presentation '*Cultivating Concord through Inter-Viewing: A New Method for Inter-Lineage Contact*' report the results of interviews they had with (meditation) teachers of different lineages, Theravāda, Zen and Vajrayāna. They claim that the aim of doing such interviews was 'not to facilitate harmonious interaction between practitioners of disparate lineages to foster mutual understanding that would enable the identification of areas common across their respective philosophies and praxes.' Thus

they dissociate themselves from a path that advocates a concord between the Theravāda, Mahayana, and Vajrayana schools. They argue that the 'right view' (to see things as they are) seems to be the key for all the three traditions interviewed. In order to find 'inter-view' of different lineages on 'right view', they claim that college students who collaboratively interview teachers may benefit not only from the fruits intergroup contact yields, but could also be a means of broadening their understanding of Right View.

Prof. Christopher S. Queen: '*Engaged Buddhism as a Unifying Philosophy*.' As the tile of this paper suggests, Queen proposes that 'engaged Buddhism' would be the key to become a unifying philosophy among the different Buddhist traditions and schools. He begins with three marks of the philosophy of 'engaged Buddhism' which originated as an anti-war movement in Vietnam in the 1960s; they are Suffering (theodicy), Karma/Saṃsāra (consciousness/mind), and the Five Precepts (ethics). Engaged Buddhists, he says, universally see the political, economic, and ecological causes of "social suffering," in addition to the traditionally accepted notion of suffering in Buddhism, which is psychological and spiritual. The author gives remarks in his conclusion that as communication and travel have become easier than ever before, engaged Buddhism has emerged as a truly global *impulse*. He also says that the engaged Buddhists offer something not offered by the others, which is a philosophy of interdependence, impermanence, and universality which sees all people are equally subject to suffering and exploitation, and equally capable of realizing freedom and dignity. Queen argues that this 'impulse' is the ground on which a new, unifying Buddhist philosophy is coming into view and that activities of engaged Buddhists would become an interest among the college students.

CONCLUSION:

The papers presented here can be classified into three broad categories: a) Philosophical reconciliation among different traditions – this includes papers dealing with the Buddhist interpretation of 'no-self' (*anātman*) and 'dependent co-arising' (*patītyasamutpāda*) in relation to western philosophy, other Indian traditions, even to modern phenomenology; b) Attempts to search for common grounds that could become a possible unifying tool among Theravāda, Mahāyana and Vajrayāna schools of Buddhist thought; and c) Engaged or Humanistic Buddhism as a unifying philosophy.

The second category has been in the mainstream in the past where scholars and those interested tried to base their arguments for a possible unification on similarities rather than dissimilarities among the different Buddhist traditions and cultures. Even the western philosophy and theology are examined for comparison and contrast. Unification or bringing all the Buddhists together is possible, because the very fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy such as the Dependent Co-arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*), the doctrine of 'no-self' (*anātman*), the goal of all Buddhists – the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, are common to all. Scholars and laymen alike agree that there exist diversity among the different Buddhist traditions, but different traditions can come closer to one another if their praxes are rightly considered and practiced. This may be called the 'unity-in-diversity-approach.' We have here a couple of papers adopting this methodology.

Dealing with the reinterpretations of Buddhist philosophical concepts, some papers presented in this panel are highly technical and involve intricate philosophical views. The idea of 'unifying' philosophical views that this panel envisaged initially is examined in a more comparative manner. Under this, discussions on terms like '*anātman*', '*vijñāṇa*', '*citta*', '*manas*', and '*nirvāṇa*' are found. These philosophical views – certainly falling into the category of Abhidharmic studies – may be considered as individual case studies.

The papers in the third category are more of anthropological or sociological nature in methodology. The authors tried to search for a common ground for unification. Engaged Buddhism or Humanistic Buddhism – both terms seem to have been derived from different sociopolitical backgrounds, has been a focal point for discussion for some time now. The word '*dukkha*' (suffering), according to its followers, has been given the interpretation that includes 'social/political causes of suffering'. This therefore calls for a collective action to eliminate such causes of suffering. Engaged Buddhism or humanistic Buddhism may therefore become a standard for a possible unification of different Buddhist traditions, denominations and culture. The keywords seem to be 'compassion' and 'right view'.

There are three papers (by Peoples; Grossenbacher, et al.; and Queen) which have some suggestions for the advancement of Buddhist studies for the university students. Two of them come from subjects somewhat related to engaged Buddhism or humanistic Buddhism, and a third demonstrates a possible itemization of Buddhist teaching, which is more of the nature of a philological exercise.

In this large conference, we have discussed many facets of Buddhism. From teaching Dhamma in places were Buddhism isn't strongly established; to unifying the diverse Buddhist philosophical views; for Buddhist psychotherapy; and even Buddhist meditation and philosophy – many difficult ideas manifested. It seems the conference was a success. Here in this session on Unifying Buddhist Philosophical Views, we must ask the question, to be self-critical: did we miss the mark? It's a fair question to ask. Did we succeed in discussing Buddhist Philosophy & Praxis? Please take the time to read over all of these articles at your leisure and make these debate-pieces back at your institutions, make these pieces for conversations and for growth. Build upon these ideas for future situations. Are these pieces successful examples of real transformations? Do they transfer well from mere theory to applicable situations? How can we better unify our philosophical views? We hope we have taken measures to improve your comprehension of Buddhism, through these multiple varieties of contributions. We hope we have improved upon Buddhist scholarship. Please enjoy the 2nd IABU Academic Conference and various papers on aspects of Buddhist Philosophy & Praxis.

Unifying Buddhist Philosophical Views

Mapping the Ascent to Enlightenment

Ronald Y. Nakasone

Trying to get a fix on the Huayan mind in the vast landscape of Buddhist thought interweaves memory with imagination. My inquiry reaches to the earliest recollections of Siddhārtha Gautama's Enlightenment, to passages in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* and learned commentaries, and to my imaging of its significance. In the process a few questions emerged: What happened during the spiritual ascent that led to the Enlightenment? What is the nature of mind? What did Siddhārtha Gautama become Enlightened to? These questions, especially determining the content of the Buddha's Enlightenment, pose major academic and intellectual questions. This essay will focus on the first and second questions; I dealt with the last question in "Spiritual Cartography: Mapping the Huayen Mind."[1]

The early documents depict Gautama's ascent to Enlightenment in heroic and mythical proportions. Written several centuries after the fact, much of the narrative is no doubt hagiography, embellished by the creative imagination and the hindsight of doctrinal rationalizations. Nonetheless, in sum, the documents chronicle an intensely personal pilgrimage that incorporates and supersedes competing spiritual landscapes. The narrative assumes the primacy of mind and efficacy of mental concentration.

The narrative opens with Māra, the personification of darkness, alarmed at Prince Siddhārtha's resolve to attain Enlightenment, launches successive waves of attack to dissuade him. He first sends his daughters who offer the pleasures of youth and worldly success. Unable to seduce the Prince, Māra attempts to frighten the Prince by dispatching an army of the most appalling demons; still unsuccessful, he unleashes the awesome powers of the wind and rain at his command. Fortified with virtue and resolve, the Prince resists these assaults. Compelled to continue the assault, Māra enters the fray. He reminds the Prince that his single minded determination is ruining his health, and that he has filial responsibilities toward his aging parents and his people. The Prince responds,

> With a mind that is true and thoughts that are upright, [I shall] put to rest your [Māra's] desires [lust, aversion, hunger and thirst, cravings, sloth, fearfulness, doubt, vanity and obstinacy, fame and profit, and self-praise]. I shall travel throughout the world and train numerous disciples. If they train diligently, follow my teaching, and attain desirelessness, in the end, sorrow will be no more (*Buddha-Dharma*, 18).

Unable to thwart the future Buddha's resolve, the dispirited Māra withdraws. Thereupon Gautama summons's his powers of mental concentration and enters the first *dhyāna* or mindfulness. Abandoning desires he dwells in bliss and joy. The Prince progresses to the second *dhyāna* by further purifying his mind and abandoning discursive thought. Ascending to the third *dhyāna*, he experiences equanimity of mind that comes from separating from pain, joy, and sorrow. With the fourth *dhyāna* Gautama's mind became tranquil, pure, pliant, and immovable, and intuits reality "as it really and truly is."[2]

---

1 "Spiritual Cartography: Mapping the Huayen Mind" reflects of the Huayan master Fazang's speculations of the cognitive structure of the Enlightened mind.

2 In this article, I am working on the presumption that the Enlightenment consists of at least three aspects, the epistemological, the ontological, and moral. Thus the phrase: seeing reality as it really and truly is. "Really" refers to

Dhyāna meditation is a method that focuses and quiets the mind, culminating in the cessation of thought. The method that led to first two *dhyāna* stages that Gautama progressively ascended were in all probability known and were being cultivated by his contemporaries.[3] Mastery of the first *dhyāna* stage concludes with an appreciation of limitless space (空無處定); the second stage results in limitless consciousness (識無辺處定). The last two stages were in all likelihood developed respectively by Ālāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputra, the two meditation masters who guided Gautama's *dhyāna* exercises. The third stage results in an understanding of non-existence (無所有處定). Dissatisfied with the experience of achieving the state of non-existence, Gautama leaves Ālāra Kālāma and seeks the tuition of Udaka Rāmaputra on the mediation of thought of no-thought (非想非非想處定). The rarefied quiescence of this final stage brought about a temporary respite from his anxieties. But after disengaging from its rarified heights and returning to the world, he experienced the same unease. The *dhyāna* experience of thought of no-thought was not the peace he was seeking. Gautama leaves Udaka Rāmaputra to experiment with other meditation methods. The method Gautama eventually develops *śamatha-vipaśyanā* 止観, wherein he discovered at a means whereby *śamatha* transforms, at some undetermined point, into *vipaśyanā* or wisdom that "intuits reality as it really and truly is."

The sequence of ascending *dhyāna* stages suggests the desirability and superiority of the Gautama's meditational method. The method of quieting, focusing, and strengthening the powers of concentration through the *dhyāna* exercises was not novel. But what was new was the discovery of the formidable cognitive and affective powers of the mind. Like *dhyāna*, *śamatha*[4] quiets the mind. Dwelling in the fourth *dhyāna* stage the Prince gained three divine wisdoms (三明). Early into the night Gautama recollects his past lives (宿命明). At the second watch (late night to early morning) he becomes cognizant of the laws that govern the birth and death of all beings (天眼明). During the final watch (early morning to dawn), after expunging the last vestiges of mind-polluting ignorance and achieving wisdom free of ignorance (漏盡明), he comes to understand that reality is the fortuitous coming together of countless "observable particulars," including events, or dharmas. He discovers a way by which he and all beings can free themselves from sufferings. With this insight Gautama proclaimed,

> Birth has come to an end. I have completed the pious practice. I have accomplished what which I had to accomplish. This is my final birth. After this, I shall never again be born in samsara (*Buddha-Dharma*, 19).

The three divine wisdoms can be understood to be Gautama's triumph over the prevailing spiritual traditions. The first and second of Gautama's insights are associated with shamanic visions. With the third insight, Gautama achieved a philosophical and ethical break through. He severed the link between ritual performance and efficacy with spiritual ease; and established a casual and

---

the epistemological aspect of enlightened-knowing; "truly" refers to its ontological aspect, including morality.

[3] The four *dhyāna* stages represent the culmination of *rūpa-dhātu* or realm of form that constitute the second of the early Buddhist schema of its threefold spiritual universe. The other two realms are *kāma-dhātu* or realm of desire and *ārūpa-dhātu* or formless realm. The realm of form also includes "realm of desire." Beings who reside in the realm of form may have freed themselves from their gross desires, but have not ascended to formlessness. By mastering the four *dhyāna* realms Siddhārtha Gautama transitions into the realm of formlessness, symbolized by nirvana and the Enlightenment.

[4] "*Dhyāna* 禅," "*śamatha*止," and "*samādhi*定、三昧" are essentially synonymous. "*Samādhi*" is the most generic expression referring to the stilling of the mind. "*Dhyāna*" is used exclusively to the four *dhyāna* stages 四禅定. "*Śamatha*" is synonymous with "*samādhi;*" "*śamatha*" is always used together with *vipaśyanā.* The goal of these meditative conditions is the elimination of impure thoughts and illusions 無漏 *anāsrava.* Purity of mind leads to the "seeing reality as it truly/really is."

moral basis for ascetic practices and release from suffering (Robinson and Johnson 1982, 17-20). Gautama's Enlightenment represents a shift from shamanic magic as a basis for understanding and curing physical and spiritual illness to an empirico-rational spiritual culture grounded on the karmic workings of an individual's intent and action.[5] The Enlightenment radically transformed how Gautama viewed (thinking-about) the world and his place in (being-in) the world. His comprehensive psycho-cosmic moral vision crystallized by the notion of *pratītyasamutpāda*[6] opened a new territory for spiritual, ethical, and intellectual explorations. A personal exploration into the upper reaches of *dhyāna* resulted in an expansive psycho-cosmic vision; it was a leap from ego-vision to omni-vision (Turchi, 2004, 135). If this is indeed true, the discovery of the two phase *śamatha-vipaśyanā* method is Siddhārtha Gautama's contribution to Indian and world spiritual culture.

Primacy of Mind

To the non-believer, the Buddhist tradition is based on the most suspect of suppositions—mind, the most fickle and narrowest of worlds.[7] Gautama's spiritual ascend assumes the primacy and power of mind. But how does the true believer understand and ascertain the universal validity of an intensely personal journey and experience of *pratītyasamutpāda* and the reality that it revealed?[8]

---

[5] This transition is most evident in the medical practices that were being developed by the heterodox (non-brahmanic schools), which includes Buddhism. Ancient Indus medical therapies utilized ritual formulas and magic that included ecstatic dance, traversing to the world of spirits, amulets, incantations, and exorcism. With the law of karma in mind, Buddhists sought the cause of illness, including mental/spiritual disorders, in antecedent causes. Likewise they linked health and well-being with the efficacy of therapies. See Kenneth G. Zysk (1991). *Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India, Medicine in the Buddhist Monastery.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.

[6] The early documents report that Gautama was enlightened to a number of "truths." These can be subsumed under three categories, which are: *pratītyasamutpāda*, the Four Noble Truths, and the Twelve Links of *Pratītyasamutpāda*. All three share the common theme of *pratītyasamutpāda*. The common precursor of the realization of these truths is the elimination of illusion無漏 *anāsrava.*

[7] In a 2 January 1638 letter Galileo (1564-1642) wrote to his good friend Diodati:

> Alas, your dear friend and servant, Galileo, has been for the last month perfectly blind, so that this heaven, this earth, this universe which I by my marvelous discoveries and clear demonstrations have enlarged a hundred thousand times beyond the belief of the wise men of bygone ages, henceforward is for me shrunk into such a small space as is filled by my own bodily sensations (quoted by Conze, *Buddhism*, 49).

The "bodily sensations" that confined Galileo to such a "small space" are in the Buddhist tradition the "raw material" for speculations on the nature of reality, including humanity and world. While Galileo discovered an expansive celestial world with the aid of the telescope, the meditation exercises that Gautama mastered to ascend higher and more rarefied stages of mindfulness revealed a luminous and immeasurably vast interior universe.

[8] Gautama's effort to understand and transcend the suffering that accompanies old age, sickness, and death is akin to search for artistic truth. Artistic director Tony Taccone writes in the *Berkeley Reparatory Magazine*:

> …artists are pursuing "the truth" as seen through the prism of their particular consciousness using their perceptual and imaginative ability to capture the deeper essence of something. All the while, they are aware of the difficulty of the task—because just as one defines the essence of something, that essence slips away and transforms in to something else. The world, as we know, is ever-changing, simultaneously being born and dying. So "the truth" for an artist is not a fixed piece of knowledge or an absolute, metaphysical reality. It is a description of singular reality born of a singular moment as seen through a singular lens. The irony is that Art is the world re-imagined in its most subjective form, which, if successful, feels like "the truth" (Tony Taccone, 2007-8. "Pursing Truth from Many Voices," *Berkeley Reparatory Magazine*, 6.)

Taccone's commentary on the artistic "truth" of Danny Hoch identified two tasks. The artist seeks to discover "truth" and to give form to this "truth." The artist intuits "original images"—primal and elemental experiences—and communicates this vision through form, color, movement, sound or space; and the artist's task is to give form to insightful experiences,

Early Buddhist thinkers expended considerable energy in describing the mind, noting its proclivities, detailing its operations, and speculating on its many phases. The Huayan master Fazang (643-712) continued this preoccupation by celebrating what he believed to be the mind's noetic capacity and affective powers. His speculations centered on *sāgaramudrā-samādhi*, "ocean-imprint meditation," which according to Sino-Japanese lore, Buddha entered twenty-seven days after his momentous Enlightenment.[9] While dwelling in this rarefied *samādhi*,[10] the Buddha revealed the content and experience of the Enlightenment by expounding the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.[11]

Fazang understood *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* to be identical with the Enlightenment with its powers of intuition that experiences reality immediately and without distortion. Sanskrit-Chinese translators rendered *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* with the expression *haiyin sanmei* 海印三昧. *Sāgaramudrā* (Ch *haiyin* 海印; Jpn *kai'in zanmai*) or "ocean-imprint" is a metaphor that likens the mind to a great mirror; *sanmei* 三昧 is the Chinese transliteration of *samādhi*, a quiescent yogic condition that is synonymous with *dhyāna* and *śamatha*. *Sāgaramudrā-samādhi* is thus a metaphor that articulates the cognitive and experiential content of the Buddha's Enlightenment.

Cognitively the Buddha perceived all dharmas to be interconnected and mutually dependent; experientially he intuited himself to be part of organic universe, rising and falling as one living-body. This vision is the basis on which Fazang and other Mahāyāna Buddhists imagined what reality to be (thinking-about the world) and understood what place humanity occupies in the world (being-in, including engaging the world). But unlike a mirror that simply reflects images; enlightened-knowing does not simply apprehend reality "as it really and truly is." The noetic powers of the Enlightenment reveal the spiritual poverty of the unenlightened, which in turn quickened sentiments of concern and compassion for all beings. The Buddha's decision to share his insight, the Dharma, articulates the dynamic aspect of the Enlightenment. Fazang crystallizes compassion, the potent correlative of enlightened-knowing or wisdom with the expression "*huayan sanmei*" 華厳三昧 (Jpn *kegon sanmai*) or *avataṃsaka-samādhi*. Both *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* and *avataṃsaka-samādhi* are intrinsic qualities of mind, the unquestioned presupposition of Huayan Buddhist thought and practice. He refers to this mind as *i-hsien*一心 (Jpn *isshin*), "one or universal-mind." Fazang's understanding of mind can be traced directly to passages in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra.* After his Enlightenment, Gautama, now the Buddha looked up to the eastern sky and saw the morning star. Thereupon, he exclaimed,

> All sentient beings possess the Tathāgata's wisdom and virtue, and yet because of false notions and attachments, they remain unenlightened (*Huayanjing*, T.10:272c).

This post-Enlightenment proclamation tacitly assumes the primacy of mind and the ontological identity between the Tathāgata (an epithet for the Buddha) and sentient (unenlightened-) beings; and tacitly celebrates the mind's capacity to intuit reality once illusions are expunged. This twofold nature of the mind is more succinctly reiterated in another passage from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.

---

feelings, thoughts, and memories that reside in and are part of his/her being. I am certain that Taccone would agree that these "truths" continually evolve and the artist who intuits them likewise changes. Like artist/performer who articulates his/her ever experiences realities, the Buddha gives form to his spiritual epiphany with "*pratītyasamutpāda*."

9 The Buddha entered into the *sāmāpattirāja-samādhi* before preaching the *Prajnāpāramita Sūtra*, the *anantanirdeśaprasthāna-samādhi* before preaching the *Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra;* the *acala-samādhi* before preaching the *Nirvana Sūtra*. These are literary devices that introduce and crystallize the content of his message.

10 See note 3.

11 By all accounts this massive work was compiled most likely in Gandhara, a region that comprises modern day Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, between the second and third centuries of the Common Era. *Avatamsaka* 華厳 or "flower ornament" is a metaphor that praises the virtues of Enlightenment.

> Mind, Buddha and sentient beings, there is no difference among these three (*Huayanjing*, T. 9:465c).

The passage claims that the difference between the enlightened Buddha and unenlightened being is simply one of degree, not category. Mind is the ground-continuum on which Enlightenment and ignorance turns; Buddhas and sentient beings share a common nature. Rephrasing this thought Fazang wrote, "Given that the mind creates the Buddha, there is no difference between the mind and the Buddha; given that the mind creates sentient beings, there is no difference between mind and sentient beings" (Fazang, *Tanxuanqi* T.: 35:215c). It is for this reason the aesthetician Yanagi Sōetsu (1889-1960) can write,

> Instead of man turning [in]to Buddha or Buddha [in]to man, Buddha turns [in]to Buddha, all distinction or opposition between Buddha and man having disappeared. Put in another way, one may say that "the thing turns into the thing itself (Yanagi, *The Unknown Craftsman* 1972, 145).

Yanagi's statement echoes the ripening of the astringent persimmon that Japanese Buddhist lore that likens the transformation of delusion or ignorance to enlightenment. The magical transformation from caustic bitterness to delightful sweetness transpires in the same fruit. If unenlightened beings are categorically different from the Buddha, there can be no possibility for enlightenment. Apples cannot become oranges; nor can oranges become apples. Sentient beings can, through faith and/or practice, transform ignorance into enlightenment.

The Buddha's initial statement after his Enlightenment is also a lament, "…and yet because of false conceptions and attachments, they remain unenlightened!" Though sentient beings possess the wisdom and virtues of the Tathāgata, they have yet tapped into this virtue store and are thus are mired in delusion. Delusions are like morning mist that obscures the radiance of the morning star. Once the mist of ignorance is lifted, sentient beings open to "the wisdom and virtue of the Tathāgata." Freed from false notions and attachments, the mind of sentient beings transforms into the expansive and all embracing Buddha mind. In addition to providing the ontological support that identifies the Buddha with sentient beings, Fazang assigns the virtues of "pure own-being and perfect wisdom;" the "essence of the *dharmatā* that is intrinsic to the *tathagatāgarbha*;" "replete in itself;" immutable, eternal and all illuminating (Fazang, *Huanyuankuan* T. 45: 637b). These qualities reiterate and celebrate Gautama's discovery of the formidable powers of the mind. As noted above, Fazang crystallized these powers with the metaphors of *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* and *avatamsaka-samādhi.*

Spiritual Topography

In the *Huayan tanxuanqi*, his commentary on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, Fazang reframes the twin virtues of wisdom and compassion intrinsic to the Enlightened-mind by identifying the twin aspects of *sāgaramudrā-samādhi*.

> The doctrine of the *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* has two phases. The first is the phase of result. In the *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* of the Tathāgata, all teachings are … perfectly revealed … For this reason, this *samādhi* is the core of [Huayan] teaching. …Second is the phase of cause. All the great bodhisattvas, like Samantabhadra, achieve this *samādhi* and implement it impartially (Fazang, *Huayan tanxuanqi*. T.35:119c).

Distinguishing between result and cause is characteristic of Buddhist analysis that is preoccupied with the law of karma. Here the stage of result refers to the realization of Enlightenment, a culmination of the Buddhist project. Not disturbed by the "winds of ignorance," the Buddha dwelling in *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* intuits reality with equal clarity. In an obvious reference to the *Dachengjijianlun* (Jpn *Daijōkishinron*) or *Awakening of Faith* Fazang writes:

> When delusion is exhausted and the mind serene, all images appear equally distinct. [The difference between delusion and enlightenment is] like the presence of wind-generated-waves on a vast ocean and the serene and tranquil ocean-water on which no form is not-reflected when the wind ceases (Huanyuanguan, T. 45:637b).

Freed from delusion, the mind does not apprehend dharmas from any particular perspective nor does it focus on any particular dharma. Empty of all formal claims to knowledge that abstracts and interprets and thus distorts the received sensory data, enlightened-knowing is pure awareness—direct, immediate apprehension; and pure experience that by-passes the formal structures of knowing, including feeling. The "result" stage also refers to the absolute position, which is to see the world from the Buddha's standpoint.[12]

Apprehending reality "as it is" is a major Buddhist project (transforming this wisdom into compassionate action is the other). But unlike one-celled organisms that are bereft of any higher order cognitive capacity and can only instinctively respond on external stimuli, enlightened-knowing of *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* apprehends a reality wherein all dharmas mutually identify and interfuse. The apprehension of reality is not a simple intellectual undertaking; it involves one's entire being. Thinking and being are one and the same. The Japanese cleric Dōgen (1200-1253) articulates this episteme-ontological knowing in "Genjōkoan," the first essay in *Shōbōgenzō.*

> When one sees color with his/her whole body and mind; when one hears voices with his/her whole body and mind—although one is one with them, his/her is not like a mirror that reflects an image on the surface, nor is his/her like the water that reflects the image of the moon on its surface, when one is realized and the other darkened. To study Buddhism is to study one's self. To study one's self is to forget one's self and to realize one self as all things. To realize one's self as all things is to strip both one's own body and mind, the body and mind of others.
>
> (Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. 1:35-36)

[12] This delusion-free seeing is akin to what Anne Dillard refers to in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* as "pure sensation unencumbered by meaning" (Dillard, 28). She was reflecting on the observations of Marius von Senden, who in *Space and Sight* collected accounts of experiences of individuals who blinded since birth had their cataracts removed. "[D]octors who tested their patients' sense of perception and ideas of space both before and after the operations" observed that their patients had "no idea of space;" and "form, distance, and size were meaningless syllables." Seeing is a learned facility. "For the newly sighted, vision is pure sensation unencumbered by meaning." A few pages earlier Dillard muses on the limitations of her, and by implications all humanity, capacity to apprehend reality. She quotes Donald E. Carr who "points out that the sense impressions of one-celled animals are *not* edited for the brain: This is philosophically interesting in a rather mournful way, since it means that only the simplest animals perceive the universe as it is" (Dillard, 21).

Dōgen's language reaffirms Fazang's explication of *avataṃsaka-samādhi*, the complement of *sāgaramudrā-samādhi*. Seeing and hearing with one's "whole body and mind" is not a simple reflection of reality. Such knowing is "to forget oneself … [and] to strip …one's own body and mind, and the body and mind of others" that enables one to free oneself from self-interest, identify with and to quicken a genuine concern for others.

The *avataṃsaka-samādhi* 華厳三昧symbolizes the compassion that is intrinsic to the universal mind. Compassion, which implements wisdom that is free from self-interest, demonstrates and sustains the validity of the enlightenment and the universal mind. Through his activities and through his being the Buddha or Tathāgata manifests the virtues of the universal mind. The practice of enlightenment "...is the exhaustive practice of all disciplines, the verification of the absolute and the establishment of virtue" (Fazang, *Huanyuanguan*, T. 45:637c). Wisdom that accords itself to the needs of sentient beings validates the reality of the Tathāgata. "There would be no meeting with truth, without true-flowing discipline" (Fazang, *Huanyuanguan*, T. 45:637c). "True-flowing discipline" verifies and demonstrates the truth of the universal mind. Practice grounded in wisdom makes real the enlightenment of the Tathāgata.

> *Sāgaramudrā-samādhi* is the emergence of all disciplines from the original Enlightenment of the universal-mind. These disciplines in turn glorify the original Enlightenment that is part of the universal mind. The *Huayan-sanmei* (*avataṃsaka-samādhi*) functions to establish the Tathāgata (Fumyō, vol. 5:105r).

The demonstration of wisdom in compassionate activity towards sentient beings serves not only to affirm the Tathāgata, but it also establishes the Enlightenment. Only through the perpetual effort of practicing the *avataṃsaka-samādhi* is the *sāgaramudrā-samādhi* possible.

> When the perfection of practice and the fruits of practice are both indistinguishable, and when the practitioner and the object [of his practice] both merge, [the realm of the enlightenment] appears distinct and clear (Fazang, *Huanyuanguan*, T. 45:637c).

Enlightenment and its practice are non-dual. The realization of the sāgaramudrā-samādhi is indistinguishable from the implementation of avataṃsaka -samādhi; the avataṃsaka-samādhi in turn is not different from the attainment of the sāgaramudrā-samādhi. Sāgaramudrā-samādhi and avataṃsaka-samādhi are the twin aspects of wisdom, the functional correlative of the universal mind, and compassion, its dynamic aspect. Both aspects are intrinsic to the universal mind.

Mapping the Mind

I began this essay with a retelling the Siddhartha Gautama's spiritual ascent. Subsequently, I introduced passages from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* that celebrated the primacy of mind and its attributes; and referred to Fazang's commentaries on these passages that reinforced the *Sūtra's* fundamental assumptions. More recently Edward Conze (1904-1979) reiterated the primacy of mind and the experiences of mind in Indian systems of thought, including Buddhism that assumed the validity of yogic practices, and that these practices to be "avenues to most worthwhile knowledge of true reality," and the basis for "the most praiseworthy conduct" (Conze 1962, 19). If these observations are correct, then at the highest reaches of *samadhi* there is indeed "pure sensation unencumbered by

meaning" (Dillard 1998, 28) that put Gautama in touch with real/true reality. And if we indeed see and hear with our whole mind and body and the study of Buddhism "to realize one self as all things" as Dōgen maintained, the Enlightenment quickens an awareness that we are linked with destiny with will all beings. The meditation that Gautama discovered did not end in passive contemplation, but wisdom "to see reality as it truly/really is." This "revelation" resulted not only in knowledge, but quickened a concern for the welfare of all beings. The examination of the mind (individual or self) leads from ego-vision to an expansive psycho-cosmic vision.

The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* describes an infinitely expansive and luminous psycho-cosmic universe, the *dharmadhātu* 法界 or "dharma-realm." This vision provided the inspiration and "raw material" from which the Huayen masters, including Fazang would construct the doctrine of *fajieyuanqi* 法界緣起 or "universal-dependent-co-arising (*dharmadhātu-pratītyasamutpāda*)," a psycho-cosmic map that makes intelligible the reality and experience of *pratītyasamutpāda* or "dependent-co-arising." Fazang, for his part, re-imagined and amplified his predecessors' speculations on *fajieyuanqi* by constructing his own map: *shixuan yuanqi wuai famen*十玄緣起無礙法門 or the "Ten Subtle and Unimpeded Dharma-gates of *Pratītyasamutpāda.*"[13] In addition to mapping the metaphysical, existential, and moral topography of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the Ten Dharma-gates gives form to the reality and experience of the Enlightenment, as well as prescribing the thrust and boundaries of Huayen Buddhist thinking. As a cognitive mediator, the Ten Dharma-gates determines the kinds of facts or information and relationships that Huayen deems to be relevant, just as different languages compel their speakers to pay attention to different things, and different scientific disciplines require their researchers to seek "facts" that correspond to their respective assumptions of phenomena. To be sure, the Ten Dharma-gates is constructed on earlier doctrinal developments and made comprehensible by metaphors, examples, and rational argument familiar to Fazang's Chinese readers. Orienting an individual to his or her place in the world, the map that Fazang sketches is also a moral compass that suggests the kind of virtues that should be nurtured and praxis to be observed. Like all maps the doctrine of *fajieyuanqi* represents the intersection between reality and abstraction; it enables us to imagine the world of Enlightenment. For a more detailed discussion, I refer the reader to my essay "Spiritual Cartography: Mapping the Huayen Mind."

[13] *Shixuan yuanqi wuai famen* is also referred to as *shixuan yuanqi* 十玄緣起and *shixuanmen* or 十玄門or simply *shimen* 十門.

References

Avataṃsaka Sūtra: 1926 Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 10 (293). Junjirō Takakusu et al, eds. Tokyo: Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō hangyōkai. Original appeared circa 150 ce.

Conze, Edward: 1962 Buddhist Thought in India. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Dillard, Annie: 1998 Pilgrim at Tinker Creek. New York: Perennial Classics.

Dōgen: 1970 Shōbōgenzō. Nihon shisō taikei, vol. 12. Tokyo: Iwanami. Original appeared in the 12th century.

Fazang: 1926 Xiuhuayan-aozhiwangjin-huanyuanguan [Cultivating the inner meaning of Huayan by ending delusion to return to the source]. Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō 45 (1876). Junjirō Takakusu et al, eds. Tokyo: Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō hangyōkai. Original composed in the late seventh century.

Fazang: Huayenjng xuanji [Studies on the profound mysteries of the Avatamsaka Sūtra], Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō 35 (1733). Junjirō Takakusu, et al eds. Tokyo: Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō hangyōkai. Original composed in the late seventh century.

Hirakawa, Akira: 1979 Indobukkyōshi [History of Indian Buddhism] vol. 1. Tokyo: Shunshu sha.

Fukumyō: N.D. Kegon tangenki jininki [Lectures on the Kegon tangenki] Unpublished hand written manuscript housed in the Ryūkoku University Library 241.4/128-W/1 through 241.4/128-W/15. Circa mid-19th century.

Mizuno, Kōgen: 1969 Primitive Buddhism. Translated, annotated, and complied by Kōshō Yamamoto. Ube, Yamaguchi: Karinbunko.

Mizuno, Kōgen: 1979 Bukkyō yōgo no kiso chishiki. Tokyo: Shushunsha.

Phya Lithai: 1982 Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology. Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds, trans. Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 4. Original appeared in 14th century.

Nakamura, Hajime: 1977 Gotama Buddha. Los Angeles-Tokyo: Buddhist Books International.

Nakasone, Ronald Y.: 2010 "Spiritual Cartography: Mapping the Huayen Mind." In Humanity and Religion in the Age of Science. Committee in Charge of Publishing Collected Papers Commemorating the Retirement of Professor Ryūsei Takeda. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.

Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, ed. 2003 Buddha-dharma. 2nd edition. Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.

Robinson, Richard H. & Willard Johnson: 1982 The Buddhist Religion, a Historical Introduction. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing.

Taccone, Tony: 2007-8 "Pursing Truth from Many Voices," Berkeley Reparatory Magazine.

Turchi, Peter: 2002 Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer. San Antonio: Trinity University Press.

Ui Hakuju: 1932 Indotetsugaku kenkyū. Tokyo: Kōshisha shobo/Iwanami

Vajiranana, Paravahera (Mahathera): 1962 Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice. Colombo: M. D. Gunasena.

Yanagi Sōetsu: 1972 The Unknown Craftsman, a Japanese insight into Beauty. Tokyo: Kodansha International.

Skillful Means and the 21st Century Buddhist Artist

Ofosu Jones-Quartey (Sumano)

For better or for worse, each one of us is now a member of a truly global community. From a Buddhist perspective, one can say that it has always been this way and that popular culture and global economics are simply catching up. However, there is a particular momentum, derived from technology, art, economics and human curiosity that make this period in history one of unprecedented potential for growth and understanding of our common bonds. Indeed, the world has become open to all of us, and so as a first-generation-American son of Ghanaian immigrants who happens to be a practicing Theravadin Buddhist and a hip hop artist, I find myself at the front of this new global revolution of thought, behavior and culture. In short, I see myself as a pioneer of the Dharma in an ambiguous new land – that of modern popular culture.

America, like most of us, is incessantly at odds with its ideals and its actions. A majority Christian nation, founded on highly conservative Puritanical beliefs, America is known worldwide more for its military might, and its material excess. Even in times of deep recession and austerity, America's fascination with extravagance, sexuality and violence rarely wanes. It can be said that the US's primary export is culture, driven primarily by the influence of celebrities – singers, rappers, musicians and actors. Globally, this culture is not usually interpreted as being anything remotely spiritual, in fact quite the opposite. It is surprising then, that within the context of a society blighted with celebrity driven abject materialism, so many popular American and global megastars have embraced Buddhism as their religion or way of life. How can this be? How can the Dharma of the Buddha, whose very tenets rest upon the notion that desire is the root of suffering, be reconciled with the sex, drugs and rock and roll culture of the West, and increasingly, the world? I believe this can be answered in a simple word: awareness.

Throughout the 2,600 year history of the Turning of the Wheel of Dharma, the Buddha's teachings have meandered around the globe and like the famous quote from Bruce Lee in "Enter the Dragon", the Dharma has moved like water, in each nation and lo, with each person, assuming the shape of its new container (culture, nationality, ontology) while maintaining its essential qualities – non violence, contemplation, and compassion with a view towards spiritual liberation. Arriving on the shores of the West at the hands of such luminaries as Madam H.P. Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott in the 19th Century, Buddhism began its slow, patient, yet deliberate courtship with the American psyche. Like a Casanova, having long learned the art of seduction by finding the emotional and psychological weaknesses in a potential lover, the Dharma, simply by remaining true to its essential principles, consistently offered a remarkable alternative to the traditional American lifestyle. Instead of war it offered peace, instead of fear it offered security, instead of faith in an unknown it offered confidence in self-development. In short, the Dharma presented America with a counterintuitive life path that ironically offered more freedom than the recklessness so embedded in its cultural DNA.

As a foreign faith in a semi hostile environment in the mid 20th century, Buddhist thought and practice remained on the fringes of American culture for decades, finding itself embraced by communities that were for the most part cultural outcasts. From the Theosophists to the Beatniks to

the Hippies to the New Agers, Buddhism remained the mistress of American spirituality. Indulged but not fully engaged, borrowed from but not totally committed to, it was only in the hearts of poets and personalities like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, and the brave western monastic pioneers who adopted the Dharma as a way of life. It is no surprise then, that along the fringes of American society, where drugs, sex, music and visual art were quietly shaping the overall cultural statement of the nation, Buddhism would find a home. This, however, raises the question of how and why did the artistic, fringe culture that found itself fascinated by Eastern thought, reconcile its excesses with the presumed modesty of the Dharma? Could it be that the process of creating art - meditative in its development and lending itself to a religious experience at the climax of its expression – was akin to the contemplative practices espoused by the Buddha? Could it be that the teachings of the Dharma – about karma and the essential bond shared between all beings, was in accord with the effects of mind-altering drugs like marijuana and hallucinogens - used by many in arts communities - which often create an awareness of universal interconnectedness and a euphoric affinity towards compassionate regard for others? Was the adoption of Buddhism by artists just another way to rebel again parent, God and country? Did the Dharma present less of a guilt trip for less than pious activity? Or was it something deeper that attracted the artist to the Buddha? Could it be that the Buddha's exhortation to his disciples to "see things as they are" was in perfect harmony with the artists silent mandate to relate to the world and express the understanding based on that relation in as true and honest a way as possible?

In Bob Marley's song "Jah Live" he quotes a passage from the Book of Proverbs in the Bible "The truth is an offence, but not a sin." It was with this sensibility that many artists began to express themselves as Buddhism began to take serious hold in the West. No piece greater exemplifies this than renowned poet Allen Ginsberg's "Why I Meditate":

I sit because the Dadaists screamed on Mirror Street

I sit because the Surrealists ate angry pillows

I sit because the Imagists breathed calmly in Rutheford and Manhattan

I sit because 2400 years

I sit in America because Buddha saw a corpse in Lumbini

I sit because the Yippies whooped up Chicago's teargas skies once

I sit because no because

I sit because I was unable to trace the Unborn back to the womb

I sit because it's easy

I sit because I get angry if I don't

I sit because they told me to

I sit because I read about it in the Funny Papers

I sit because I had a vision also dropped LSD

I sit because I don't know what else to do like Peter Orlovsky

I sit because after Lunacharsky got fired and Stalin gave Zhadnov a special tennis court I became a rootless cosmopolitan

I sit inside the shell of the old me

I sit for world revolution.

In this poem we can see cultural, political and self awareness emboldened by Buddhist practice as espoused by one of America's greatest poets. If we read Ginsberg's poem as a snapshot of Buddhism's interaction with the American artistic psyche in the 20th Century, we can see that the practice of "bare attention" encouraged by Buddhist meditative thought is embedded in the way the artist sees his or her world. An artist must naturally be self aware in order to perfect his or her art. He or she must strive continually to be a genuine interpreter of reality, and to express an understanding of reality from personal experience that somehow speaks universally. Without paying attention to the *dhammas* of inner and outer life, an artist can be only minimally effective at best.

In light of the above, we are still left with the problem of Buddhist ethical conduct in conflict with free artistic expression. How does the *Siladhamma* accept the artistic use of profanity, violence, sexuality and mind altering substances? Does it accept it at all? From the violent films of Jet Li (a Tibetan Buddhist), Oliver Stone (a Buddhist), Steven Seagal (a Tibetan Buddhist) to the profanity-laden lyrics of Wu-Tang Clan's Robert Diggs aka, 'The RZA' (a quasi-Buddhist), to the material excesses and sometimes profane imagery explored in my own music, are we as Buddhist artists disrespecting the very religion and life-path we hold dear in our exercise of free expression? Or is there something deeper and more subtle taking place? Has the Dharma meandered its way into a cup of grotesque design that deceptively serves to more clearly heighten its innate, non-dual purity? Begging the forgiveness of an admitted bias, I dare to say the answer is YES.

In 2002, I cofounded a hip hop group called Shambhala with my friend and spiritual brother, Agua. Myself being Buddhist and Agua being a Taoist and the both of us being African American, infused our music with a very unique combination of Eastern spirituality, Black nationalism, street wise reflections and an overall "otherworldly" aura. Our debut album "The Lotus Of…" featured an image of the Buddha on the front cover enshrined in a boarder of crimson and gold, with the mantra "Om Mani Padme Hum" subtly appearing in the background of the imagery several times over. Our song titles were written in English, however the font used was made to look like Sanskrit. We gave our songs such lofty names as "Full Moon of the Tao", "Enlightenment", "Siddhartha", "Catch The Message", "The Wind" and more. Not ones for mere imagery, our lyrics were indelibly woven with the deepest themes of the Dharma here is an excerpt of my verse in our marquee song, "Enlightenment".

> *"Communion/I offering into fusion/bless-ed sacrament the union/the illusion/blinking through the mirror of time/the doorway to enter divine/ realization of mind as the vehicle/seeping through the cracks of seeking truth in fact/leaking through the black void combination of wisdom and merit I/shift the paradigm/lifting the apparent mind/be aware of singles/single pointed concentration paralyzed in the lotus posture/parallel to open altars holy sons and higher daughters in the feast of silent presence/like the essence of an un-speakable phenomenon/the Buddha-mind is un-reachable when one has gone beyond/sensory perception/unattached to the melodic song the pillar that the prophet's on supports the roof of heaven/ - shoot through the dimension transcending disembodied moving lucid through convention as a river to the emptiness/shining from the western paradise with Amitabha Buddha I recall the sutras and I bow at my masters feet…."*

Anyone versed in Buddhist thought, or even remotely interested in the conceptual basis of Buddhism would find the above verse highly invigorating and perhaps even special. And in fact many did. To this day Shambhala has fans around the world. From New York to Taipei, there remain several high minded individuals who continue to be inspired by our music and its message. There was, however a problem: authenticity.

In my analysis, the music of Shambhala had two fundamental weaknesses. I must pause here to say that my interpretations are my own and my brother Agua may feel differently about my observations. Also, in discussing what I perceive to be weaknesses in our operation, I can only speak of my own artistic weaknesses, as my brother may very well not have been in lockstep with me in my own process of growth and development. However, since we were a duo, even one member's weakness was enough to be cancerous, and only compounded moreso if both of us shared shortcomings. That said, I became increasingly aware that the audience most receptive to Shambhala, were people who were either scholastically educated or self-educated to a high degree. Whether street smart or book smart, a Shambhala fan was SMART - in a unique way. Our fans hungered for knowledge and self-development and our music provided a soundtrack for their inner endeavors. While our relationship with our fans was beautiful and special, sadly a fanbase with such lofty ideals, in the context of the global population, was highly concentrated and represented a niche. We were, to coin a cliché, "preaching to the choir". Our fans were already on their own paths of self-cultivation, and whether Shambhala existed or not, many of them would have still been committed to their journeys. As an artist, I wanted more. I wanted to make an impact with those who had no knowledge of the Path. I wanted to reach those who were suffering the most, those who were embroiled in materialism and the ignorant pursuit of material fulfillment as a means to lasting happiness. But my inner conflict with Shambhala's music did not stop there. As evidenced in the verse quoted above, our music always spoke from the perspective of the spiritually advanced, or even the already enlightened. Put modestly, this was a little distant from the truth. While we were dedicated, devoted practitioners, striving daily to live up to the ideals of our group and our spiritual paths, we in Shambhala were not saints. I certainly was not. I was still struggling in my practice, struggling with anger, lust, confusion and greed, I was using intoxicants and behind closed doors, I was not living up the ideals presented in my music. In the end, I felt that my life was at odds with my art, and so I decided to leave the group.

After I left Shambhala, I contemplated leaving music behind completely. My contemplation was short lived. I knew music was what I wanted and needed to do as an artist, and that I wanted to share my unique perspective with the world. If I was going to continue to make music however, I would do so only if I was not confined to a particular spiritual aesthetic, both in sound and in dress (in Shambhala we often wore huge Buddhist Malas and colorful African garbs). If I was going to be reborn as a solo artist, I would be reborn in the image of the common-man, not the quasi-monk. I was, however not sure of this approach, and so I sought the counsel of my dear friend and teacher, the Ugandan monk Bhante Buddharakkhita. I asked Bhante if he thought that my idea of toning down the overt spiritual themes in my music and image was perhaps a more effective way to introduce Dharma themes to a larger audience. He unhesitatingly said "Yes".

I must also pause here and remind the reader that Bhante Buddharakkhita is a Theravadin Buddhist Monk, and as such, he does not listen to popular music as it is prohibited by the *Vinaya* rules. I do not want to give the impression that Bhante has listened to my new material (some of which contains very secular themes and language) and endorses it. Rather, Bhante counseled and

encouraged me in the direction of toning down what may have been seen as a proselytizing message in my work with Shambhala to something more subtle and more nuanced, and more honest. I wanted to meet my audience where they were and share my experience. I also wanted to let myself off the hook so to speak and be a little more of a lay person.

For the greater part of 10 years (coinciding with the years I spent in Shambhala), I was striving in my *vipassana* practice with an intensity that bordered on neurosis. I would feel terrible guilt if I ever missed a sitting or didn't sit long enough, I would read nothing but Dharma books, spend hours away from my family meditating in woods and graveyards and idolized such luminaries as Ajahn Mun Bhuridatta, HH The XIV Dalai Lama, Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo, Mae Chee Kaew and others (they remain my heroes to this day). I felt a quiet urge to become a monastic, and as such I attempted to live as much of a monk's lifestyle as I could muster. Musically I was only interested in communicating the most complex Dharmma themes, even if I hadn't truly experienced them for myself. All of this was delusion. I was a father, a husband, a musician, a householder. But I was practicing in a way that neglected these truths. My relationship to my practice had quietly become a form of suffering. I needed to relax and accept my position as a householder and remove the thorn of guilt and neurosis from my mind. This acceptance would include the way I made my music and would begin a series of counterintuitive transformations in my life

I often say that the Buddha's path to liberation is completely counterintuitive to the samsaric mind. While we believe that the pursuit of our desires will bring us lasting happiness, the Dharma teaches us the exact opposite. True happiness is achieved through the resisting our unexamined impulses and through selfless acts of compassion and generosity. In considering the often ironic nature of the Buddhadharma, thought to myself that perhaps I could make more of a spiritual impact on the world if my music was actually less spiritual (at least on the surface). Bhante Buddharakkhita summed it up this way: "The Dharma is a jewel, and even the smallest jewel is more valuable than a huge pile of trash, so small references to Dharma themes in your music will make a deeper impact with a wider audience." It was with this reasoning that I began to record my first solo album "Tomorrow is Today".

"Tomorrow is Today" marked a departure in style and sound for me and many were shocked by it. Gone were the ornate sounds of gongs and chanting in my music, replaced by a more driving, urgent electronic sound behind my vocals. Gone were references to Zazen, single pointed concentration and bowing to masters, replaced by songs that acknowledged everyday desires and impulses in the light of self awareness. In short, I was being honest with where I was in my life, still attracted to the illusions of the world, but armed with the power of the Dharma so as to not be totally taken in by them. I was not a monk, I was a meditator, living in the world. The lyrics on "Tomorrow is Today" transitioned seamlessly from the brazenly materialistic to the inspirationally spiritual as evidenced in my song "New Generation":

> **Verse1:** *"Don't wait 'cause the time is now/ and tomorrow's too late to rewind the dial/ 300 C with the suicide doors/we could never let em know what you and I saw/ new rap king and I'm rulin' by law use that thing baby you can try more/jewels that bling baby we can buy more/no friends please only two in my Porsche/zoom and ride off on the Sunset Strip/ one mo' let it go/but it come back quick/ when the drum track hit and I hear 'em go ape sh*t? cope another whip with a Kurt Cobain kit word game famous/they can't change us/Born I and that's word to my name, Cuz/and for my people getting loose when at the day's end, I did it all for the new generation.*

Verse 2: "*You gotta love it I'm a cool breath of fresh air/'cause my style's right now and and it's next year/I get it on don't confuse me with other guys/call my garage a cocoon for the butterflies/I meditate/ stay awake when its late at night/I'm feelin great tell 'em space is a state of mind/and when the stress gets ugly from the pain inside/remember when I had nothing couldn't make a dime/ hands up if it feels good to live life/and even when it gets dark you can still shine/so when they ask you how you feelin tell em hyped up/see I be chillin four wheelin in a white truck/plot thicken/clock's tickin and the time's up/new blood move up show my crew love/the beat is hittin and the groove is amazing/I did it all for the new generation*

From the above two verses, we can see clearly the change in my solo content from my previous work. My new material was more compelling, more interesting and more street wise, than the "top-down" model used when I was in Shambhala. This angered some in my core audience who interpreted this shift as backsliding and selling out, but overwhelmingly the response was positive, and not only that, the response was widespread. People felt that I was speaking to them and to the inner conflict that all of us face between our material desires and our spiritual impulses. "Tomorrow is Today" was jokingly described by one listener as "schizophrenic" in that it leapt back and forth between themes and concepts in the same way we notice the mind leaping back and forth when examined in meditation.

My new material was certainly effective. I had traded in my mala for a platinum chain, albeit with a Buddhist amulet as its pendant. I was mainstream. My music contained references to common aims and desires for wealth and fame, as well as my scrutiny of those desires under the lens of Buddhist meditation. Clothes, cars, women, money, insight, meditation, self-reflection and liberation all became interwoven topics in lyrics that sometimes contained profanity over beats tailor made for dance clubs. So, was this Dharma?

In February of 2011, I was interviewed by Rod Meade Sperry for an article in Shambhala Sun's online magazine "Sunspace" about my album "Tomorrow is Today". When asked about whether my music was still in line with my Dharma roots I replied "Yes". My argument was that my music was a form of *upaya*, or skillful means, and while I may be using secular topics more regularly, and my language may be more gruff, ultimately the purpose of my music was to show how attractive and enthralling sensual desires are and to be honest about that, and then to also help both the listener and myself come to an understanding that ultimately sensual desires are impermanent and not the true source of happiness. I felt that by offering a mode to the listener where he or she did not have to feel guilty about having material desires, instead what I offered my music was an alternative: the pursuit of righteous wealth. I had come to terms with being a householder, and like Anathapindika, the wealthy merchant who supported the Sangha in the time of the Buddha, I realized that I could be of better service to the world if I pursued wealth in order to use my influence for the good of living beings. Upaya. Below is an excerpt from a recent interview I did with a magazine called Beltway Bounce, which sums up my position on the matter.

Beltway Bounce*: Let's touch on your Buddhist faith. This is something that I know very little about. Does this influence your music at all – as far as what you can and can't do or anything?*

Born I Music*: "It's interesting. Yes, it does inform my music. It's funny because I'm packing right now and I'm finding all of these old lyrics. It's just amazing to me to see how much*

I've written. I've got books worth of rhymes and I can see my progression as an artist in all of those old rhymes. Earlier in my music, when I was just discovering Buddhism, my writings were very, very idealistic. All about spirituality and enlightenment. That's mostly what people knew me for. They identified me with that. What people don't know is that while I was writing from the perspective of someone that was already spiritually realized, I was still [heavily attracted to materialism]. Keeping all that stuff secret. I was putting forth an image of someone who was spiritually advanced and not really touching on the human things….that spiritually advanced people still do. They just do it from an advanced place. [laughs] I think that's what the disconnect was with Shambhala and the people sometimes. I once read an article reviewing Shambhala in a European magazine and one of their comments was "we love their music, but we never get to experience who they are as people." That really stuck with me. At the end of the day, Buddhism is not about statues, it's not about beads, it's not about clothes and it's not about monks per se. It's basically about a way of living that keeps you aware of what's happening in your mind and what's happening in your body. Then it asks you to make decisions based on that awareness. You know what I'm saying? You see what state of mind you have, you see how your body is feeling right now… how are you gonna act based on that? It's like a moment by moment analysis of who you are and what you do. So yes, there are guidelines and stuff like that but there's no like, 10 Commandments. It's basically, try your best not to do any harm to yourself and others, and try to be aware of yourself from moment to moment. Also, letting yourself reveal itself to yourself and see where you find yourself [laughs]. But as long as you're living, you're gonna get your feet dirty and we're in the rap game…this is the music industry, there's almost no way of not getting your feet dirty in this. Through meditation I'm learning to balance getting my feet dirty enough to keep walking, without falling all the way in the mud. For me, what I'm concerned with is being a full human. The full expression of being a human. If you don't know what you are, how can you transcend it? So, I want to have my champagne, and I want to have my Porsche, and I want to have my Lamborghini, I want to wear my Heyday Footwear and I want to wear my Kennett Watches. I want all of those things. But, when I'm in my Lamborghini, I want to make a pit stop to the local food bank and make a donation. When I'm in my Porsche, I want to stop by a homeless shelter to drop off some clothes. If I get $100k for some show, I want to break off half of that to some foundation to help end hunger or provide clean water to people in need. I want to be wealthy so I can be a service to others. That's what Jay-Z said, "I can't help the poor if I'm one of them." So to me, it's the pursuit of righteous wealth, and sometimes it's not righteous how you come up on it, but it's what you do with it when you get it that matters, ultimately. So you'll hear that spirituality in my music, but you'll also hear wreckless materialism and that's a good snapshot of where my mind and life is right now. I have a yearning towards the good, but I also have the yearning for the basic things that most humans want. I just try to do it with awareness and keep it balanced."

An article in the March 2011 edition of the Shambhala Sun Magazine contained an interview with The Rza leader of the world famous rap group Wu-Tang Clan and himself highly influenced by Buddhist thought, here is an excerpt regarding his lyrical content:

Shambhala Sun:*Buddhism tries to emphasize right speech, so some Buddhists have a hard time with the cursing in rap. Can you explain why you're not afraid of using explicit language?*

> ***The Rza:*** *In one of the books I have on Buddhism, a student is talking to the master. The student is saying things like fart and shit, and the master condemns him for it. But later on, the master finds himself describing something and in no other way could he describe it besides using foul words. Therefore, he got into the position of the student. Also, there is a story about Da Mo when he first went to Shaolin. He was meditating when a monk walked by, saw mud, and said, "Don't let the mud get on you. It's dirty and will defile you." But then Da Mo said, "Yeah, but the lotus plants grow out of the mud. So, if mud can produce something so beautiful, how can it be foul?" Curse words can be considered dirt. If the word gets the message through, then it's not a negative word. Making the point clearer is what words are for.*

The ideas and arguments expressed in the above lead us back to the question of whether the Buddhist artist can produce work that is on the surface antithetical to Buddhist ethical thought yet is counter-intuitively intended to bring the uninitiated (and the experienced) listener to the very same principles that his or her work appears to defy. It is my belief that this is possible. Jet Li's films, especially "Hero" and "Danny the Dog" and several others, all depict violence, which violates the first of Buddha's five precepts. Yet, Li's films (more recently since he became a Tibetan Buddhist) have been designed to demonstrate that despite the central character's violent circumstances, it the protagonists inner conflict that is far more important and far more impactful than any physical enemy he can subdue, leading the viewer to understand what the Buddha espoused in the Dhammapada: "Better than conquering a thousand enemies is he who conquers himself". An interview with Asian Bite sums up Li's secret agenda in his otherwise violent films:

> *Of his films, Li considers the most important to be Hero, Fearless and 2005's Danny the Dog, in which he plays a senseless brute, trained to savage anyone running foul of his loan-shark master. "Everything I want to say is in those three movies," he declares. "The message of Hero is that your personal suffering is not as important as the suffering of your country. The point of Danny the Dog is that violence is not a solution. Fearless is actually about personal growth — about a guy who decides that in the end his greatest enemy is himself."*

More than the message in his movies however is Li's real-life ability to use the wealth garnered from his seemingly negative (violent) history of filmmaking into tangible philanthropic efforts.

> *[T]he One Foundation is Li's contribution toward that balance, and for its sake he has taken time out from films, becoming a full-time relief worker and traveling tirelessly on foundation business. This month he is set to appear at a Clinton Global Initiative meeting in Hong Kong. "Philanthropy is my passion and my life now," he says. "I wake up and eat and I'm thinking about it. I'm still thinking in the bath. I talk to everyone I can." It is difficult to name any other A-list celebrity, not even Bono, who has made such a total commitment* – Asian Bite.

Whether by use of clandestine Dharma themes shrouded in samsaric excess and profanity, or by applying the wealth gained from creating art that speaks to the material and sensual desires of the audience, to promote the *Sila, Samadhi and Prajna* of the Buddha, I believe that the 21st Century artist devoted to Dharma must adopt what some might call a tantric approach to art. I use the term loosely here in orde to highlight specifically Buddshit tantra's emphasis of using all of the energies in the mind, negative and positive to gain awareness towards enlightenment.

In vipassana meditation we are trained to watch the mind unflinchingly, like the bare attention prescribed in Zen practice. In following the *Satipatthana* method of meditation, we do not attempt to pretend or change what is in our minds and bodies, we simply observe the reality of what is inside us and derive insight into the impermanence, suffering and non-self nature of whatever it is we observe. The artist's mediation is his or her art and the object of that meditation is the world outside and within the artist. As Buddhist artists we seek to honestly relate our experiences and observations regardless of if what we examine or express is pretty. We are showing the extreme nature of the world of desire and in all honesty our degrees of attraction to that world as we are unenlightened beings. Not only this, we are expressing our desire to ultimately be free from samsara, even if we only have the vantage point of being knee-deep within it. Also, we may strategically use the culture of sex, drugs and violence that so enthralls the world, as a bait to the audience in order to gain trust, only to ultimately guide them to a place of deeper understanding about the world, its pitfalls and liberation through sense awareness. I liken this use of *upaya* to the Parable of the Burning House as told in the Lotus Sutra and as related and explained by the website of the American Zen Buddhist Temple:

> *In a village, there was a Grhapati. He was old and very rich. He had lots of lands, houses, and servants. This Grhapati's house was huge. The main house was old, the walls were fallen in ruins, the pillar roots were rotten, and the beam of the house was crocked.*
>
> *Suddenly, the house was on fire. The Grhapati's sons were in this house. The Grhapati was horrified when he saw fire burning the house. He thought, although he can safely escape from the door, but his sons were happily playing inside of the house. They did not aware that the house was on fire. Then he thought, there was only one door in this house, and that door was small and narrow. His sons were too young to aware that the house was on fire, they were long for what they were playing, and they could be burn by the fire. He should tell them that this house was on fire, all of them should leave the house right away. Do not let the fire taking their lives. So the Grhapati told his sons about this immediately. Although the father told his sons that the house was on fire, but his sons just glance at him then they went back to play again. They did not believe and did not want to accept the truth. They did not know what the fire would do to the house.*
>
> Meanwhile, the Grhapati thought, this house was burning by the fire, if his sons and himself did not get out of here in time, they all be killed by the fire. He had to think of a way to prevent the fire taking his sons' lives. The father knew that his sons like various kinds of rare and precious toys, so he told his sons that, there were rare and precious toys outside of the house, if they did not go out to get the toys, they all be regretted for that. And he promised to give his sons whatever they want. The sons all rushed out of the house once they heard what their father said. The Grhapati's mind was full of peace and joy after he saw all of his sons leaving the burning house safe and sound. They all set down on a lot outside of the house. Then the sons asked their father to give them the rare and precious toys that he promised them. The Grhapati generously gave each son a rare and precious great ox cart.
>
> *The Buddha is like this Grhapati, he is the father of all sentient beings. He sees that all the sentient beings are living in the burning house of the triple world. They are burning by the fire of birth, old, sick, death, worry, ignorance, and three poisons; and are having various kinds of sufferings caused by the five desires arising from the objects of the five senses and*

greed. They then suffer in the hell, animal, and hungry ghost realms. Or they are rebirth in the heaven as gods or goddesses, or in the human realm. All the sentient beings are neither aware nor horrified by these sufferings: the suffering in poverty, the suffering of being separated from those whom one loves, and the suffering of having to meet the hateful. They enjoy and sink in these sufferings, and they do not generate the mind of weary of the world and want to abandon it. They do not want to liberate from karma and from those sufferings. The sentient beings reside in this burning house of the triple world, are running from the east to the west and from the west to the east. Even though they are in great suffering, they do not troubled by these sufferings. When Buddha sees this, he thought, he is the father of all sentient beings, he should pull those sufferings out of the sentient beings, and give them the joy of the Buddha-wisdom.

In order to save and set free all sentient beings, Buddha uses skillful and appropriate methods to deliver all the sentient beings to apart from the sufferings and to gain happiness and great wisdom.

There are many who, in taking the work of modern Buddhist artists at face value, may disagree with our content and approach. However, if they analyze our work from the perspective of skillful means, it is my hope that they will see that not only is our art viable under the scrutiny of Buddhist principles, but very likely, what we produce on the frontlines of popular art may be the only way the world at large comes in contact with core Buddhist principles in a compelling, attractive way, enough to perhaps make them take a closer, deeper look at their lives. Not unlike our mothers, who hid medicine in sweet foods to help us when we were sick.

May all beings be well, happy and peaceful.

"Big Tent" Buddhism: Searching for Common Ground Among Western and Asian "Buddhisms"

Dr. William Yaryan
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Make me one with everything:

When the Dalai Lama was traveling earlier this year in Australia and doing interviews, a television news announcer tried to tell him a joke.

"The Dalai Lama walks into a pizza shop and says, 'Can you make me one with everything?' "The Buddhist leader, who is known for his sense of humor, looks mystified. "You know what I mean?" - the newsman asks. Then he gestures: "Can you make me one" -- folding his hands in a *wai* -- "with everything?" -- waving his hands in a circle. Clearly not understanding the joke, the Dalai Lama kindly replies, "Everything is possible." The distraught television announcer holds his head in his hands, and says, "I knew that wouldn't work!"[1]

This hoary old joke has made the rounds for some years. In the original, the Dalai Lama tells a hot dog vendor: "Make me one with everything." Its humor depends on the common Western misconception that all Eastern spirituality is a search for mystical union, or "oneness," with the universe. Most Buddhist teaching, however, does not advocate an expansion of self, but rather the reverse. The difference between the Dalai Lama's Vajrayana form of Buddhism - one of the Big Three - and the vaguely Buddhist-themed spirituality of New Age enthusiasts in America is vast, indeed.

This paper is written for a panel on "Unifying Buddhist Philosophical Views." But the more I look around, the less unified I find Buddhism to be. Aside from the identity of the founder and the Pali scriptures which most Buddhists take to be authoritative, there are enormous differences: between Asian and Western Buddhists, American convert and immigrant Buddhists, traditionalists and modernists, nationalists and universalists, monks and laity, secularists and religionists, even old hippies and young punks. Many claim to follow the "original" and "pure" teachings of the Buddha, while teachers in the West argue that Buddhism is a psychology or philosophy rather than a religion. Even among the accepted "schools" of Buddhism - Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana - there are often radical differences in ritual, texts, style and custom.

I intend to examine distinctions and similarities between various Western and Asian "Buddhisms" by comparing and contrasting several apparent extremes: the popular piety of devotional Buddhism in Thailand where making merit to achieve a better rebirth is considered by the lay faithful to be more important than the quest for enlightenment, and Stephen Batchelor's secular or atheist Buddhism which contrasts starkly with the traditional Buddhism of B. Alan Wallace in their recent debate. I hope to show that the encounter of the teachings of the Buddha with other cultures has always produced hybrid Buddhisms that differ in significant ways from their

[1] Hoffer, Steven, "Karl Stefanovic's Dalai Lama Joke," *The Huffington Post*, June 14, 2011; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/14/karl-stefanovic-dalai-lam_n_876596.html.

roots. Today the challenge of "modernism" has produced remarkable adaptations of the teaching in both Asia and the West, of which participants are often unaware. I will conclude by proposing a harmonization of the hybrids as a way to unify global Buddhism based on the ideas of "family resemblance," conversation and the dialogue of polyphony.

Encountering Thai Buddhism: "Is that Buddha or Ganesha in the spirit shrine?"

The religious culture of Thailand is strange and bewildering to a visitor. Thais bow in respect (even while they are driving) to monks, spirit houses, temples, fertility shrines, ribbon-wrapped trees, and even collections of toy zebras along the highway (I've yet to figure out why?). They wear string tied around wrists that has been blessed by monks or relatives wishing them to be safe. Similar string is looped around houses and even buildings like my condo, presumably as a form of protection, and often the string will have been connected to a monk preaching on the teachings of the Buddha (*buddhasasana*) while holding a leaf-shaped screen in front of his face. Lovers lay flowers on the altar of a Hindu deity at a shrine in front of Central World, one of Bangkok's biggest malls, to petition or thank the god for favors granted. Devotees construct pagodas outside temples from river mud to celebrate Songkran, the secular water-throwing festival. Thais have told me only monks can achieve enlightenment and certainly not women (who are prevented by Thai clerical rules from becoming nuns). The faithful wear large amulets around their necks (sometimes huge collections of them) that are bought and sold like rare stamps at a market opposite one of the city's oldest monasteries. Few Thais meditate but most donate food, flowers, incense, candles and money to monks and at temples to make merit (*tamboon*) in hopes of a fortunate rebirth as well as a way to help others.

What's a trained monotheist to do? I'm well read (comparatively speaking) in the different world religions and am sufficiently versed in the wisdom of D.T. Suzuki, Alan Watts, the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hahn (not to mention Theosophy and numerous other New Age schools). I've studied Hindu philosophy, been to India, and even once lectured at UC Santa Cruz on the *Bhagavad Gita*. A little book by Baba Ram Dass (formerly Harvard psychology professor Richard Alpert) taught me how to meditate, and I've gone on retreats with Jack Kornfield and Pema Chodron, among others. Surely I should be capable of understanding Buddhism in Thailand. Thus began my education in the lived tradition of faith, and my current attempt to write an academic paper for this conference at the university where I teach English to monks.

It may be impossible for a Westerner, growing up in countries where Church and State have long been rigorously separated, to understand a culture with no clear division between the sacred and the secular. Japan, Siam and other Asian polities did not have words for "religion" until the Christian missionaries arrived, and in Japan the word used was "Christian" until other neologisms were devised.[2] Modernization in the West was accompanied by a disenchantment whereby magic, superstition and the irrational were displaced by a whole raft of new '-isms' that fragmented dominant worldviews. It has been assumed that the final victory of modernity would mean the end of religion, and certainly, now that the globe has been unified electronically and digitally, that should be the case; but religion today, in all of its local and universal forms, seems stronger than ever. Postmodernist thinkers are trying to explain this anomaly.

[2] Josephson, Jason Ananda, "When Buddhism Became a Religion," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 33:1, 2006.

However, the objectives of academic analysis and the diffusion of cognitive dissonance in the psyche of the research are often in conflict. Attending dhamma talks and meditation retreats didn't help me. I began to think that meditation was the pastime of the idle well off and did not give me access to the Thai religious world view. Each night my wife bows three times to the Triple Gem and says her prayers. "What do you pray for," I asked. "That everyone be happy," she said. We keep a collection of icons on top of the bookshelf, which contains numerous popular dhamma books in Thai, and refresh them every *Wan Phra* (monk's day) with flowers, water, and red soda. The other morning we rose early and went to find a monk at the market where she bought two bags of congee and offered it to him for *tamboon*. "Now I feel happy," she said afterwards. When my friend Holly died, at the cremation ceremony I was more curious than reverent about the Buddhist ritual, and I suspect the other expats had similar feelings. I don't know what the Thais felt, those who are confident about rebirth, but then, as now, I felt like an outsider.

Popular Buddhism in Thailand is something entirely different from that found in the United States. It's more cultural, incorporating magic and superstition, like the all-encompassing religiosity I encountered in India where temples are filled with people of all ages and classes, joyfully participating in what to me were arcane rituals. It's more devotional and less intellectual than in the west where one has the "freedom" to choose a new religion or spiritual practice like a lifestyle; and Thai Buddhism is a fulltime affair rather than a Sabbath interlude. This 24/7 aspect of faith may be the defining difference.

Big Tent

Buddhism has been described as a "big tent religion."[3] Buddhist scholar and author Franz Metcalf calls his web site "The Dharma is a Big Tent, Welcome to My Tiny Tear in It."[4] Blogger David Chapman, who practices in the Vajrayana tradition, writes critically of what he calls "consensus western Buddhism" which is "supposed to be inclusive. It is a big tent, in which we can be one happy family, respecting each others' differences, yet celebrating the shared essential core of Buddhism, its fundamental unity."[5] But what is that core? Aye, there's the rub![6]

In Western politics, a "big tent" party is one that includes a broad range of views and ideologies among its members. In a two-party system like America's, it's important to broaden the base of the party to be as inclusive as possible to appeal to a large percentage of voters in an election. In 1975, Democratic House Speaker Tip O'Neil told a reporter, "The Democratic Party is a big tent. We are widely diversified." And in 1989, a leading Republican gave a much-quoted statement that helped to popularize the term: "Our party is a big tent. We can house many views on many issues."[7] But these days, humorist Jon Stewart told his TV show audience, "Republicans take a slightly different approach. They have a big tent – you're just not allowed in it."[8] Some say the tent of the Republican Party, dominated by the conservative Tea Party movement, is a "pup tent" rather than a "big tent."

[3] DemocraticUnderground.com, http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=show_mesg&forum=389&topic_id=1956382&mesg_id=1956541.

[4] The Dharma is a Big Tent, Welcome to my Tiny Tear in It, http://mind2mind.net/mind2mind_home.html.

[5] David Chapman@Wordpress, "Inclusion, Exclusion, Unity and Diversity," June 19, 2011, http://meaningness.wordpress.com/2011/06/19/inclusion-exclusion-unity-and-diversity/.

[6] From Shakespeare's Hamlet soliloquy.

[7] http://www.thisdayinquotes.com/2009/11/lee-atwater-republicans-have-big-tent.html.

[8] http://www.quotecounterquote.com/2009/11/do-republicans-still-have-big-tent.html.

Underneath the big tent of Buddhism, both the Dalai Lama's ancient Tibetan form of Buddhism, fast becoming the most popular in the west, and the vague Buddhist-themed spirituality of becoming "one with everything," hopefully, can coexist. Different understandings of the Buddha's teachings are possible because there is little heresy in the world religion of Buddhism. Its doctrines emphasize orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy, promoting correct conduct and practice rather than right beliefs. But to define Buddhism in this way is to accept terms and categories devised by Christian theologians to determine orthodoxy and heresies that were punished in the Middle Ages by burning at the stake. Both the labels "Buddhism" and "religion" were created to draw a distinction between Christians and heathens, although Asians quickly learned to appropriate the terms in order to defend themselves against their cultured despisers.

Invention of "Religion" and "Buddhism"

Numerous scholars of "religion" have criticized the terms commonly used. "While there is a staggering amount of data, phenomena, of human experiences and expressions that might be characterized in one culture or another, by one criterion or another, as religion," writes religious historian Jonathan Z. Smith, "there is no data for religion. Religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study."[9] Timothy Fitzgerald studied philosophical theology but decided that social anthropology was a more useful field for researching the conversion movement of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in India. Fitzgerald wants "to reconceptualize what is now called religious studies as the study of institutionalized values, and the relation between values and the legitimation of power in a specific society."[10] The discovery of Buddhism "was therefore from the beginning, in a somewhat literal and nontribal sense, a textual construction," according to Tomoko Masuzawa, whose book is intriguingly titled *The Invention Of World Religions, Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved In The Language Of Pluralism*. "It was a project that put a premium on the supposed thoughts and deeds of the reputed founder and on a certain body of writing that was perceived to authorize, and in turn was authorized by, the founder figure."[11]

Even the term "Theravada Buddhism," used to distinguish Buddhists of Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka (the former Ceylon) from their northern cousins, is disparaged by Pali scholar Peter Skilling who suggests that it "came to be distinguished as a kind of Buddhism or as a 'religion' - remembering that 'Buddhism' is a modern term and that 'religion' is a vexed concept - only in the late colonial and early globalized periods, that is, in the twentieth century."[12] Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, in his comprehensive and insightful study of Therevada Buddhism in Southeast Asia, says the label is "a Western, or, at least, a modern construction," and that most adherents are unaware of it outside departments of Buddhist Studies. Western scholars believed it was closest to the early or primitive Buddhism taught by the Buddha himself. But "there is no 'pure' or 'primitive' aspect of any of the religions, and certainly no 'ism' existed," Prapod argues.[13]

[9] Smith, Jonathan Z., *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

[10] Fitzgerald, Tim, "Religious Studies as Cultural Studies: A Philosophical and Anthropological Critique of the Concept of Religion, *Diskus* Vol. 3 No. 1, 1995; http://www.basr.ac.uk/diskus/diskus1-6/FITZGERD.TXT.

[11] Masazawa, Tomoko, *The Invention Of World Religions, Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved In The Language Of Pluralism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 126

[12] Skilling, Peter, "Theravada in History," in *Pacific World: journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, Fall 2009, p. 62.

[13] Assavavirulhakarn, Prapod, *The Ascendancy of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2010, p. 177, 188.

The old labels and methods of classification don't work very well in Asia. I'm now convinced that "religion," "Buddhism," "Theravada Buddhism," and even "Hinduism" are terms invented in the 19th and early 20th century by mostly Western scholars (with some eager assistance from Asians struggling to resist missionaries and colonial power) who constructed doctrinaire world views based on the recently translated Pali and Sanskrit texts. The living traditions in Southeast Asia practiced by Asians were ignored or denigrated until they were reinvented and repackaged to conform to modern Western sensibilities and exported to America and Europe with great success. Meanwhile, the unexpurgated local traditions continue, and, if recent reports are true, are flourishing and proliferating despite state (and intellectual) attempts at centralization and control. The shopworn labels of "religion" and "Buddhism" make it difficult to see the inextricable hybridity of culture and values because we want to identify the separate strands believed to be part of a syncretistic amalgam ("this is Buddhism, this is animism, this is Brahmanism").

Perhaps "Buddhism" is simply a reification of disparate practices and it would be better to speak of "buddhisms" in the lower-case plural, just as some Christian theologians use the term "christianities" to emphasize the proliferation of sects after the death of Jesus and before church councils canonized scripture. I accept the social constructionist argument that both "Buddhism" and "religion" were categories created in the 19th century by scholars to distinguish Christianity from the other two ethnic monotheism and from the heathenism, paganism and idolatry missionaries and colonizers were discovering outside Europe and North America.

So does that clear the decks? If you follow the argument so far, there is no such thing as "religion" in the singular, or even a monolithic "Buddhism," and the label "Theravada Buddhism" applied to the what was called disparagingly "Hinayana" (lesser vehicle) by the Mahayanists is equally a misnomer of little use in speaking of the living traditions practiced by millions of Asian Buddhists, from Ceylon to Korea. Other than stories about the founder, written down hundreds of years after his death, we have Pali and Sanskit texts translated by European philologists in the 19th century. These were then used to construct an "original" Buddhism and to ridicule actually existing Buddhists encountered by Christian missionaries as corrupt and superstitious. The fundamental difference for buddhisms, then, is between the 19th century Western enthusiasts for Buddhism, from Schopenhauer to Thoreau, and the masses worshipping Buddha images in temples throughout Asia for a thousand years.

Buddhism Moves Out of India

In his standard social history of Theravada Buddhism in English, Richard Gombrich calls it a denomination rather than a sect. The term means "Doctrine of the Elders" and "thus claims conservatism." A Theravadin reached Ceylon from India "in or very near 250 BCE," Gombrich explained. "In the eleventh century it went from Ceylon to Myanmar; over the next two centuries it diffused into the areas which are now Thailand, Laos and Cambodia."[14] Gombrich says the Theravada form of Buddhism did not come to Thailand until the 13th century.[15] According to tradition, writes P.A. Payutto,

[14] Gombrich, Richard, *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988, p. 3.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 126.

Buddhism was introduced into Thailand more than two thousand years ago, when this territory was known as Suvarnabhumi and was still inhabited by the Mons and Lawas. At that time, one of the nine missions sent by King Asoka of India to spread Buddhism in different countries, came to Suvarnabhumi. This mission was headed by two Arahants named Sona and Uttara and they succeeded in converting the ruler and people of the Thai kingdom to Buddhism.[16]

Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, in *The Ascendancy of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia* (2010), disagrees with Gombrich and Payutto. He believes there were multiple introductions of numerous schools of Buddhism, and that "by the first or at least the second century CE, Buddhism was already known in Southeast Asia,[17] It was brought by merchants, monks and pilgrims "as part of an overall process of Indianization."[18] It arrived hand-in-hand with what is now called "Hinduism," and they remain paired, even until today. "Religious diversity was the rule in every part of Southeast Asia," Prapod writes, "and wherever Buddhism was present, Hinduism was there also,"[19] in harmony or in synthesis rather than discord. It merged with indigenous beliefs and spirit cults already present, which "appear to have existed alongside Indian religions rather than being replaced by them."[20] Religious culture, he argues, "was polylithic from the beginning. The idea that one professes to belong to a single religion is foreign to the Southeast Asia mind which sees no need to synthesize multiple beliefs into one exclusive belief."[21]

The fabled Asoka mission in 250 BCE to bring Buddhism to Ceylon and Southeast Asia is an unproven myth, Prapod believes, and the form of Buddhism called Theravada was established by kings in Burma (Myanmar) and Siam (Thailand) only in the 11th century for political and economic reasons. It never fully replaced indigenous and Indian ritual and cultural traditions. "Southeast Asian Buddhism embraces a number of cults and practices: relics, images, votive tablets, amulets, recitations, mantras, and Maitreya, the future Buddha. All of these existed before the eleventh century."[22] The attitude was, "the more the better," and Prapod thinks that if Christianity "had not been so insistent on one God and one faith, it too, might have been accepted more readily into Southeast Asian religious life."[23]

Given this natural hybridity of religious values and practices, the question for historians to ask is, how did a slice of the whole come to be reified as something separate and given a name? What may seem obvious today - "religion" and "Buddhism" - has a history. It was not always thus.

The many Asian buddhisms, hinduisms and animisms existed in happy ignorance of their separateness until the onset of what historians call "Modernity" occurred, primarily in Western Europe. This is the period inaugurated by European voyages of discovery, followed by the scientific revolution that stimulated radical changes in political and economic structures. Beginning approximately in 1500, it's signposted by the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, the transition from

[16] Payutto, P.A. (Phra Brahmagnuabhorn, *Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World*, Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn rajavidyalaya Buddhist University, 2005.

[17] Assavavirulhakarn, op cit, p. 68.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 45.

[19] Ibid., p. 112.

[20] Ibid., p. 124.

[21] Ibid., p. 147.

[22] Ibid., p. 179.

[23] Ibid, p. 162-3.

feudalism to capitalism, industrialization and the rise of the nation state. The negative effects of the corresponding worldview of "modernism," caused by the dissolution of traditional ways of life and values, included anxiety, displacement and disenchantment. Karl Marx described the changes this way: "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind."[24]

The other dark side of modernism was the attention paid to the rest of the world. Christian missionaries from America and Europe set out to convert the heathens, pagans and idolaters, and European states and monarchies followed up their "discovery" of native peoples by conquering and colonizing their lands. This had important ramifications for the buddhisms I have been describing.

A Tale of Three Modernisms

For the first 2,000 years of its history, teachings and practices centering on the figure of the Buddha spread out of India south to Ceylon, east to the mythical land of Suvarnabhumi, and north to Tibet, China, Japan and Korea. There was little contact and interchange between the different sects and schools that intermingled with local cultures to create different hybrids. European visitors lumped all their observations into the category of "heathen" and compared it unfavorably with the three monotheistic "world" religions. But in the 19th century, philologists working as colonial administrators in Indian and Nepal discovered and translated sacred texts of the Far East. This hodgepodge was cobbled together by Western translators and academics into a "world religion" called "Buddhism," a self-serving gesture that may be termed intellectual colonialism. At first the texts were seen as evidence of "pure" Buddhism while living practices were viewed as corruptions of the original religion. Few spoke for the actual followers of the Buddha who inhabited a meaningful cosmos rather than possessed membership in a hypothetical religion. Then two Theosophists from the U.S. went to Ceylon, became Buddhists and reconstructed the religion, making it more "protestant" and anti-colonial in the process. There is now a large corpus of literature on "Buddhist modernism," which, with the connivance of Asian teachers, made Buddhism more rational and scientific, countering an earlier European opinion that it fostered nihilism. Homegrown modernists (and King Mongkut in Thailand did his part) tried to purge Buddhism of superstitious accretions and promoted an intellectual understanding of the dhamma over a devotional one.

Once 19th century European philologists had rescued Pali and Sanskrit texts from the dustbin of history and constructed what they considered was an "original Buddhism" based on a founder and an ancient scripture, the Christian missionaries and foreign colonizers in Asia were faced with determining the status of actual existing heathens and idolaters who mixed and matched their worship of Hindu deities with icons of the Buddha and local gods in their seemingly bizarre rituals. Their practices were labeled as "superstitions" and "corrupt." However, since legitimate nation states were deemed to possess modern characteristics, which included a recognized world religion, both anti-colonial nationalists and monarchs sought to update their religion in a process that scholars are calling "Buddhist modernism."

For the purposes of this study, I want to examine the modernization of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and, finally, in America. In each case, modernizers reinterpreted the Buddha's teaching

[24] Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, Chap. 1.

to appeal to a new audience while calling their reconstructions the "true" and "pure" Buddhism to affirm its authenticity. But there were also ulterior motives. In Ceylon (Sri Lanka), under the thumb of British rule, Christianity's privileged status was contested by local nationalists and a couple of Theosophists from America on a mission to uncover Eastern mystical wisdom. In Thailand, a monk who became king reformed the local religion partly to prevent colonizing attempts by the British and French. In America, the case was slightly different. Christianity was in crisis after two world wars and had failed to deliver the goods in the new capitalist culture of consumption. Missionaries from several Buddhist nations brought to dissatisfied Americans a modernized faith that fitted their needs, one that was rational and shorn of unfamiliar rituals.

The literature on Buddhist modernism and its history is voluminous and growing daily. "Modern Buddhism" was coined as a category in the 1970s by Heinz Bechert.[25] An overall view is provided by David S. Lopez in the introduction to his *A Modern Buddhist Bible* (2002).[26] A comprehensive summary is given by David L. McMahan in *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (2008).[27] Lopez followed his compendium of modernist texts with *Buddhism and Science: a Guide for the Perplexed* (2008) that examines one of the basic tenets of Buddhist modernism that Buddhism is superior to other religions because it is scientific due to the early advice of the Buddha to test and verify every claim about reality.[28] A number of writers have studied the reforms of Thailand's King Mongkut (Rama IV)[29] and similar efforts at further modernization of Buddhism by reforming that reform on the part of the monk Buddhadasa Bhikku.[30] The subject of American, and by extension Western, Buddhism has been well-dissected by numerous scholars. One has even suggested calling it "Ameriyana" to indicate that it has all the characteristics of a new sect like the other "yanas."[31]

The key point to remember about Buddhist modernism is that it is a new reinterpretation based on a selection of the myriads of texts discovered and translated by Europeans, usually with the connivance of Asians who used this new construction to make claims for social and political as well as religious purposes; it was a co-creation of East and West and not just another "Orientalism" intended to praise the "mysterious East." And it resulted in separating "Buddhism" from the hybrid cultural values and practices the people of Asian had engaged in for over a millennium. The actual lived religion of Asians in all its national and ethnic forms is more ritualistic and superstitious compared to the reasonable and intellectual understanding of Buddhism that often serves the interests of elites more than common people.

25 Schedneck, Brooke, "Modern Buddhism and Reinterpretation," *Wandering Dhamma*, May 1, 2011; http://www.wanderingdhamma.org/2010/08/26/modern-buddhism-and-reinterpretation-2/.

26 Lopez, Donald S., *A Modern Buddhist Bible*, New York: Beacon Press, 2002.

27 McMahan, David L., *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, London: Oxford University Press, 2008.

28 Lopez, Donald S., *Buddhism & Science: A Guide for the Perplexed (Buddhism and Modernity)*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

29 Schedneck, Brooke, "Sovereign Yet Subordinate: The Use of Buddhist Discourse During the Reigns of King Rama IV, V, and VI in Siam (1851-1925)," *Explorations: a graduate student journal of southeast asian studies*, Vol. 10, Spring 2010, pps. 23-31; Somboon Sooksamran, "Buddhism, Politics, and Scandals: A Study of the Changing Functions of the Sangha Act," Singapore: NUS History Society e-Journal, 2006; David Chapman, "The King of Siam invents Western Buddhism," July 5, 2011, http://meaningness.wordpress.com/2011/07/05/the-king-of-siam-invents-western-buddhism/.

30 Jackson, Peter A., *Buddhadasa: Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, (1987) 2003.

31 McDonald, T.J., "Ameriyana: The Western Vehicle of the Buddha Dharma," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2010, http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/imwjournal/vol2/iss1/3/; see also: Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, "The Challenge of the Future: How Will the Sangha Fare in North American Buddhism?", Sept. 8, 2008, http://www.abhayagiri.org/main/article/the_challenge_of_the_future/; Jan Nattier, "American Buddhists: who are they?", *Current*, No 395, Sept. 1997, http://www.budsas.org/ebud/ebdha175.htm.

The characteristics of Buddhist modernism are broad and variable for the three I intend to discuss. Because of its beginnings, a focus on a written text and a purported founder who wrote or inspired them is essential (similar to the stories about Jesus). Tradition, ritual and myth are dethroned, a characteristic it shares with Protestantism that gave many of its creators a model. Along with ritual, clericalism is deemphasized. Because the Buddha supposedly rejected the Brahmin priesthood along with the caste system, anti-Catholic Westerners saw him as an ally and he was hailed as "the Luther of Asia." Modernists stressed the importance of individual experience, which eliminated the need for a mediator with the divine, although many devotees were later to accept the necessity of a "guru" and the value of a teaching lineage which led back to the Buddha. Other characteristics that influenced Buddhism modernism included romanticism, centralization (and also decentralization) of authority, affirmation of the ordinary, environmental concern, social engagement, scientific naturalism, and a focus on techniques of meditation to the exclusion of all other rituals and practices, an imbalance especially predominant in western Buddhism. McMahan writes that it is an "actual new form of Buddhism" that is:

> …the result of a process of modernization, westernization, reinterpretation, image-making, revitalization, and reform that has been taking place not only in the West but also in Asian countries for over a century. This new form of Buddhism has been fashioned by modernizing Asian Buddhists and western enthusiasts deeply engaged in creating Buddhist responses to the dominant problems and questions of modernity, such as epistemic uncertainty, religious pluralism, the threat of nihilism, conflicts between science and religion, war, and environmental destruction.[32]

Lopez adds that what was different about Buddhist modernism "was the conviction that centuries of cultural and clerical ossification could be stripped from the teachings of the Buddha to reveal a Buddhism that was neither Theravada or Mahayana, neither monastic or lay, neither Sinhalese, Japanese, Chinese or Thai."[33] He adds that it is "perhaps best to consider modern Buddhism not as a universal religion beyond sectarian borders, but as itself a Buddhist sect."[34]

The occult sect of Theosophy was founded in New York City in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky, Col. Henry Steel Olcott and others as a movement to discover and reveal ancient wisdom in the mysterious East. Their claims, recognizable today as New Age true verities, involved communication with "Mahatmas" (great souls) who lived in Tibet. In their travels in India and Ceylon they, perhaps unwittingly, inspired nationalist movements in both countries. One of their protégés was the Indian guru Krishnamurti who later rejected their support and achieved spiritual renown on his own. In Colombo, where Buddhism, under the thumb of its British Christian rulers, was dying out (as it had previously in India), Blavatsky and Olcott took Refuge Vows and became perhaps the first Western converts to Buddhism. Olcott declared his mission to be the restoration of "true" Buddhism in that country. He wrote *The Buddhist Catechism* which is still in use, and helped to design a Buddhist flag. A native disciple of Olcott's took the name Anagarika Dharmapala. He helped to found the Maha Bodhi Society which continues today and attended the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 to much acclaim. Olcott, whose memorial statue I have seen in Colombo, said he was not a "debased modern" Buddhist, like the Sinhalese who were ignorant of their own religion. He identified his Buddhism with that of the Buddha himself.

[32] McMahan, op cit, p. 5.

[33] Lopez, "Buddhist Bible," op cit, p. xxxvi.

[34] Ibid., p. xxxix.

"Our Buddhism," he declared, "was, in a word, a philosophy, not a creed."[35] During a public address given in New York, Dharmapala declared:

> The message of the Buddha that I bring to you is free from theology, priestcraft, rituals, ceremonies, dogmas, heavens, hells and other theological shibboleths. The Buddha taught to the civilized Aryans of India twenty-five centuries ago a scientific religion containing the highest individualistic altruistic ethics, a philosophy of life built on psychological mysticism and a cosmology which is in harmony with geology, astronomy, radioactivity and reality.[36]

In short, a Buddhism very unlike that practiced by millions of ignorant Buddhists throughout Asia, but one very congenial to western tastes.

King Mongkut of [Thailand] (Rama IV), "more than any other single person, invented Western Buddhism," declares Buddhist (Tibetan) blogger David Chapman.[37] Before the Theosophists ever set foot in Asia, King Mongkut, grandson of Rama I, founder of the current Chakri dynasty, had been a monk for 27 years. He formed a new monastic order, Thammayut, to purge what he saw as superstitious and magical elements from the state religion. He also dictated a strict ascetic practice for his monks and emphasized a literal interpretation of scripture. Taking scripture rather than oral tradition as authoritative was a new idea, according to Chapman, that some attribute to his friendship with Protestant missionaries. He also believed Buddhism should be rational and scientific (the latter an interest that killed him when he contacted malaria while on an expedition to observe a solar eclipse he had accurately predicted). Siam's independence was threatened by the British in Burma and the French in neighboring Laos and Cambodia. King Mongkut, and his son, King Chulalongkorn, undertook reforms to show the foreign powers that their country was a modern one that should not be colonized. Rama V centralized both political and religious authority in Bangkok (which has been termed an act of "internal colonization") and put monks under control with the Sangha Act of 1902 which is still largely in place. Along with his successor, Rama VI, these three modernizing kings of Siam, as Brooke Schedneck has shown, used Buddhism to centralize and create a national culture and political identity. In the process,

> The Siamese have modified the Buddhist tradition to highlight to Westerners its modern elements. Thus Buddhism was used to help Siam remain sovereign and maintain its own modernity but at the same time to be compatible with the Western model.

Modern Buddhism, she writes, "is clearly a variable and complex tradition that can be molded to suit one's interests for desired results."[38]

A century later, King Mongkut's reforms were continued by Buddhadasa Bhikku, albeit in a different direction. As Peter A. Jackson points out in his book *Buddhadasa: Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand*, his reforms closely parallel aspects of King Mongkut's reforms, which included a rejection of traditional cosmogony and cosmology and an attempt in western terms to demythologize the world. "Buddhist intellectual culture in Thailand until the twentieth century," Jackson writes, "can only be described as conservative and stagnant."[39] Under the sway of

[35] Ibid., p. xiii.
[36] McMahan, op cit, p. 96.
[37] Chapman, "The King of Siam...." op cit.
[38] Schedneck, "Sovereign Yet subordinate," op cit, p. 28.
[39] Jackson, op cit, p. 17.

European-influenced forms of Buddhism, Buddhadasa and others rejected folk religion and "assumed the very principles of rationality, logical consistency, and scientific methodology which were previously used to denigrate Buddhism ...[in order] to prove the scientific character of the religion."[40] This same reformed Buddhism, says Jackson, "was ironically held up as symbolizing 'Thai-ness' and Thai independence from the west."[41] Buddhadasa, who died in 1993, is much admirer today by educated Thai Buddhists who share his iconoclasm and preference for meditation. He rejected large sections of the *Abhidhamma* text and Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* commentaries as well as a concern for kamma and rebirth, views according to one scholar that most Thais would find "shocking."[42] He also claimed monks had no privileged access to *nibbana* which is equally possible for lay people. Buddhadasa hoped to purge popular religious practice of magic and superstition and rejected the popular view of "merit as a metaphysical quantity which can be accumulated" (he reinterpreted it as an selfless act for the benefit of others).[43] According to Jackson:

> Buddhadasa claims that the source of the obfuscation of the Buddha's universally relevant message of salvation lies in the influence of Brahmanical and animist beliefs, which have become associated with institutional Buddhism and which have distorted the original pristine character of the religion.[44]

A universalist who would be more highly regarded were his works translated and distributed widely in the west, Buddhadasa believed that all religions were different fingers pointing at the same moon (to borrow a metaphor). In a small book titled *No Religion*, he wrote that,

> Those who have penetrated to the essential nature of religion will regard all religions as being the same. Although they may say there is Buddhism, Judaism, Taoism, Islam, or whatever, they will also say that all religions are inwardly the same. However, those who have penetrated to the highest understanding of Dhamma will feel that the thing called "religion" doesn't exist at all.[45]

This is a very heart-warming message to Buddhist modernists everywhere, and it certainly affirms that a "big tent" is possible, not only for Buddhists but for people of all faiths. But it's a message very much at odds with those who remain unaware of alternate Buddhist realities as well as the fundamentalist believers who hold to one "true" Buddhism over all others.

A wide selection of Buddhists from different Asian countries, including Dharmapala from Ceylon, were invited to Chicago in 1893 to attend the World Parliament of Religions. Their teachings had been already modified significantly by modernist ideas that made them acceptable to American sensibilities. The Transcendentalists in New England, notably Emerson and Thoreau, read Edwin Arnold's "The Light of Asia," a romanticized version of the Buddha's life, with much interest.[46] Another participant at the Chicago meeting was D.T. Suzuki who assisted Zen monk Soen Shaku and later would work with the publisher and early Buddhist promoter Paul Carus. Suzuki had

---

40 Ibid, p. 43.
41 Ibid., p. 42.
42 Jackson quoting anthropologist Niels Mulder, p. 107.
43 Ibid., p. 224.
44 Ibid., p 75.
45 Buddhadasa Bhikku, *No Religion*, reprint, 2005, p. 3.
46 Tweed, Thomas A., *The American Encounter with Buddhism 1844-1912: Victorian Culture & the Limits of Dissent*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992, Chap. 2.

an enormous influence on the spread of Zen in America in the 1950s through his writings and association with thinkers such as Christian monk Thomas Merton, Anglican priest Alan Watts, and the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung. After World War Two, many Americans returned to Japan to study and some became monks, including poet Gary Snyder who helped popularize Buddhism with fellow members of the Beats, like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. Poet Ginsberg was a co-founder of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa with Chogyam Trungpa Rimpoche, and influenced the next generation of rebels, the hippies of the 1960's, with his brand of zany Buddhism.

Western travelers to Asia in the 1970's studied with Buddhist teachers and returned to America and Europe with a Buddhism often stripped of ritual and cultural specifics that was eagerly embraced by many seeking an alternative to Christianity. This new "product for spiritual consumption" was very successful: meditation centers were established, priests, monks and rimpoches were imported from Asia to train students and local teachers, and Buddhism was established in universities as a field of academic study. The distinction between the big three major traditions was often blurred. This transplanted Buddhism was hailed less as a religion than as a philosophy, a system of ethics and a psychology. Over the last forty years, Buddhist teaching and practice has been modernized and reinterpreted to fit Western interests and sensibilities in ways that differed, sometimes radically, from the traditional Buddhism of immigrant communities in the West and from the Asian examples that first inspired Western visitors.

The many buddhisms available in my hometown of Santa Cruz, California, is typical of the smorgasbord of offerings throughout the United States. There are three Tibetan monasteries, one from Myanmar, a Zen center and two vipassana groups. Socially engaged Buddhists promote peace and justice events and participate with Christians in communal meditation. But there is little connection with the Buddhist "church" in the nearby farming town of Watsonville whose members are descendents of Asian immigrants. In America, convert and immigrant Buddhists do not congregate easily under a big tent.[47]

While today Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Thailand is limited to the modernized Theravada denomination based on Pali scriptures with a hierarchical Sangha and a strict separation of monks and laity, buddhisms in America and the West proliferate outside of the big three with their focus on meditation and a minimum of ritual. The "Sangha" is taken to mean followers as a whole rather than the monastic establishment that is notable by its absence. The internet and podcasts spread varied interpretations of the dhamma to sympathizers, believers, practitioners and devotees of all stripes. Among them are Buddhist punks, hardcore Buddhists, as well as secular and pragmatic Buddhists. Since there is no Buddhist Vatican, almost anything goes. However, when the British monk Ajahn Brahm ordained four bhikkunis (nuns) at his temple in Australia last year, all hell broke loose. Trained in the Theravadan forest tradition, which does not allow the ordination of nuns, Phra Brahm broke a rule and his monastery was disestablished by the forest Sangha in Thailand. Other Western monks in the forest lineage, notably Ajahn Sumedho, did not support him. The ideas of former Tibetan and Zen Buddhist monk Stephen Batchelor, author of the controversial *Buddhism Without Beliefs*,[48] have been especially contentious. The antipathy of traditional (although modernized) Buddhists toward secular Buddhists could be seen in the critical response Batchelor's views received from B. Alan Wallace.

---

[47] Hickey, Wakoh Shannon, "Two Buddhisms, Three Buddhisms, and Racism," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 11 (2010).

[48] Batchelor, Stephen, *Buddhism Without Beliefs: A Contemporary Guide to Awakening*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1997.

The Great Buddhist Debate: Icons and Iconoclasts

They could be spiritual twins. Both went to Dharamsala, India, in the early 1970s to study at the Tibetan Works & Archives, after it was established by the Dalai Lama, and both ordained as monks. B. Alan Wallace from Pasadena, the son of a professor at a Baptist seminary, was three years older than Stephen Batchelor who was born in Scotland and raised by a single mother in a London suburb. Both were sent by the Dalai Lamai to Switzerland to study with Geshé Rabten, first at the Tibet Institute Rikon, then located at Le Mont-Pèlerin, and later at the Swiss hamlet of Schwendi where they helped the contemplative Tibetan monk establish Tharpa Choeling (now Rabten Choeling). Joining them there was Stephen Schettini, who two years ago published a memoir, *The Novice,* with the subtitle "Why I Became a Buddhist Monk, Why I Quit, and What I Learned." Wallace and Batchelor have become proponents of two seemingly diametrically opposed views of Buddhism. Wallace represents the traditionalists, and Batchelor the secularists, and their views were aired in a sometimes contentious exchange during the last year in the pages of *Mandala*, a quarterly published by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) established by followers of Lama Thubten Yeshe. Wallace began with "Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist,"[49] and Batchelor responded with "An Open Letter to B. Alan Wallace."[50] Stephen Schettinni weighed in with his own reminiscences of the two one-time friends with "An Old Story of Faith and Doubt."[51] Buddhist blogger Ted Meissner has also made extensive comments on his Secular Buddhist blog.[52] This is no tempest in a teapot, but a serious discussion of fundamental differences between two prominent Western Buddhists that raises question about whether all "buddhisms" can fit under the same big tent.

Wallace is not subtle, and comes out with both guns blazing. Calling Batchelor's opinions in numerous books "ridiculous," "groundless speculation" and even "illegitimate," he writes that his old colleague was "recreating Buddhism to conform to his current views" despite the "consensus by professional scholars and contemplatives throughout history," and ignoring the "most compelling evidence of what the Buddha taught." Wallace takes aim at Batchelor's ideas presented in *Buddhism Without Beliefs* (1997) and most recently in *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist* (2010)[53], which show, Wallace argues, his "strong antipathy toward religion and religious institutions" and his "blind acceptance of materialist assumptions about consciousness." Wallace then pulls out his Weapons of Mass Destruction and links this "scientific materialism" with "the unspeakable tragedy of communist regimes' attempts to annihilate Buddhism from the face of the earth." (Granted, he piggybacks this on a critique of atheist Sam Harris who advocated the practice of Buddhism while making similar allegations against religion in general[54]).

The real target of Wallace's over-the-top ire is undoubtedly Batchelor's denial of rebirth and karma. Wallace believes rebirth was central to the Buddha's teaching, and was a unique position

[49] Wallace, B. Allen, "Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist," *Mandala*, October 2010, http://www.mandalamagazine.org/archives/mandala-issues-for-2010/october/distorted-visions-of-buddhism-agnostic-and-atheist/.

[50] Batchelor, Stephen, "An Open Letter to B Alan Wallace," *Mandala*, January 2011, http://www.mandalamagazine.org/archives/mandala-issues-for-2011/january/an-open-letter-to-b-alan-wallace/.

[51] Schettinni, Stephen, "An Old Story of Faith and Doubt," *Mandala*, April 2011, http://www.mandalamagazine.org/archives/mandala-issues-for-2011/april/an-old-story-of-faith-and-doubt-reminiscences-of-alan-wallace-and-stephen-batchelor/.

[52] Meissner, Ted, "A Reply," *The Secular Buddhist*, http://www.thesecularbuddhist.com/articles_response.php.

[53] Batchelor, Stephen, *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010.

[54] cf. Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2005.

for his time. Batchelor thinks it was a prevailing belief in the Indian worldview and that the Buddha neither affirmed nor denied it, but rather treated it as irrelevant. Wallace thinks his old comrade thus takes the "illegitimate option to reinvent the Buddha and his teachings based on one's own prejudices." He says this is the route followed by Batchelor and "other like-minded people who are intent on reshaping the Buddha in their own images." Wallace believes an experience of the Buddha's wisdom can be accessed through meditation, and he criticizes Batchelor's account for describing "the experiences of those who have failed to calm the restlessness and lethargy of their own minds through the practice of samadhi, and failed to realize emptiness or transcend language and concepts through the practice of vipashyana."

Near the end of his diatribe, Wallace calls Batchelor and Harris "both decent, well-intentioned men," but says their writings may be regarded as "near enemies" of the true Buddhist virtues described by the commentator Buddhaghosa: loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. Their view of the Buddha's teaching are "false facsimiles of all those that have been handed down reverently from one generation to the next since the time of the Buddha."

Batchelor's response is more measured and collegial. He begins by apologizing for "any offence I might inadvertently have caused you and others through my writing." He recognizes that his views might "conflict with Buddhist orthodoxy" and might seem "puzzling, objectionable and even heretical to followers of traditional Buddhist schools." His students, however, have included many frustrated by traditional forms of Buddhism who find themselves confronted with a "Church-like institution that requires unconditional allegiance to a teacher and acceptance of a non-negotiable set of doctrinal beliefs." Batchelor writes that he left the Tibetan monastery where they had been colleagues because "I could no longer in good faith accept certain traditional beliefs." He then went to Korean to study as a monk in the Zen tradition" which he found "refreshing and liberating."

As for rebirth, Batchelor says, "the Buddha would have regarded this entire argument as being beside the point." Batchelor continues to study the Pali Canon, an authority on which both former monks agree, but they come to different conclusions about the meaning of suttas based on different selections and interpretation. Both cite the Kalama Sutta. Batchelor adds that "this is the only text I know of in the Pali Canon where the Buddha explicitly states that the practice of the Dharma is valid and worthwhile 'even if there is no hereafter and there are no fruits of actions good or ill.' This is the closest he comes to an agnostic position on the subject." He notes also that he and Wallace both cite passages describing the Buddha's awakening. "It is hardly surprising that you select a Pali text that describes it in terms of remembering past lives, while I prefer to cite the accounts that don't."

Batchelor's view of the intractability of language is particularly galling to Wallace who quotes him as saying: "We can no more step out of language and imagination than we can step out of our bodies." This contradicts Wallace's certainty that experiences confirming his traditional view are gained through meditation and practice, outside of our linguistic cages. Batchelor sees this as an attempt to claim privileged insight into the texts.

> The Pali canon might be the most uncontested record of what the Buddha taught, but that doesn't mean it speaks in a single, unambiguous voice. One hears multiple voices, some apparently contradicting others. In part, this is because the Buddha taught dialogically, addressing the needs of different audiences, rather than imposing a single one-size-fits-all

doctrine. And it is precisely this diversity, I feel that has allowed for different forms of the Dharma to evolve and flourish.

I can think of no better words for a manifesto of “Big Tent Buddhism.”

Schettini, the ex-novice, has a unique perspective. “Alan and Stephen were both elder monks and teachers in our little community, and so role models to the rest of us.” The two shared close quarters but differed in temperament. He says Batchelor “put on an air of nonchalance” while Wallace seemed “uncomfortable in his skin.” Wallace is “a loyal traditionalist and authority figure” who feels “both qualified and responsible to state what is acceptable and what is not.” On the other hand, Batchelor “is more concerned about the plausibility of the teachings ascribed to the Buddha than dependent on whether or not he actually taught them.” The crux of the difference, according to Schettini, is that “what to Alan is historical fact is to Stephen debatable.” Batchelor’s rewriting of history and reconstruction of what’s been “true” for traditional Buddhists “undermines the august pretentions of scholarship and tradition and infuriates Alan.”

What’s troubling to Schettini about the exchange of his elder monks is that “Alan questions Stephen’s integrity. That’s not debate; it’s personal.” Wallace’s tone is unfriendly and rude, treating him as an upstart while claiming to be a paragon of correctness. “Alan sees himself as representative of the tradition in a way that Stephen is not... I think that icons are important fixtures in the Dharma landscape and so are iconoclasts.” Wallace’s creed raises two important questions for Schettini: Are these teachings and people really sacred? Is Alan trying to keep Buddhism *pure?* He says Buddhism a religion for Wallace, and therefore sacred, but not for Batchelor. And the former novice agrees with Batchelor that purity is impossible. “Buddhism is a construct.” Can Western Buddhism not handle diversity? - he asks. As for himself, “I lost faith in the scholarly illusion of the straight and narrow...I don’t know exactly what the Buddha taught. I wasn’t there.”

The great debate between Batchelor and Wallace puts in stark contrast the traditionalist and the secular incarnations of buddhisms. Traditionalists like Wallace abound; he publishes frequently, is leading a retreat in Phuket in Thailand as I write, and speaks and teaches his version of the dhamma around the globe. Batchelor, on the other hand, has spawned a generation of followers with his doubts about purity and the “true” tradition, gathering a new generation of hardcore, pragmatic and secular Buddhists to his orbit. Can the disciples of each all hang out together in today’s “big tent Buddhism”?

Conclusion

If I’ve planted some doubts about the true verities of Buddhist studies I will have succeeded, at least this far. But please don’t misconstrue my thesis: In discussing the difficulty of unifying Buddhism, I wish to affirm the value of “buddhisms” and, in particular, the devotional culture of veneration and merit-making that surrounds me here in Thailand. While as a philosopher, I’m attracted to secular and modernist reinterpretations of the Buddha’s teachings, I worry that innovations in the West that reject rituals and “superstitions” may “throw the baby out with the bath water.” I share the sentiments of a blogger named Jayarava, a member of the Triratna Buddhist Order (formerly Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, FWBO), who wrote,

Poor traditional Buddhists assiduously feeding and caring for monks are in some ways more admirable than middle-class Western Buddhists with desultory meditation practices and still driven by their own selfishness. Though we so often scoff at them as merely 'ethnic buddhists'."[55]

Donald K. Swearer gives a warning in his book, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*, about leaving the baby without its bathwater. "This modernized view of the Buddha-dhamma demythologizes the tradition in the service of ethical and psychological values...There is a risk, however, that in the service of rationality and relevance, the varied and challenging complexity of the tradition is ignored or lost."[56]

The trajectory of Buddhist modernism has produced centralized and nationalist buddhisms in Sri Lanka and Thailand, and a profusion of traditional and innovative buddhisms in America and Europe. In some cases, as McMahan reports in the final chapter of his book, "From Modern to Postmodern?", there has been a "retraditionalization," in which adherents "reconstruct tradition in response to some of modernity's dominant themes, attempting to imagine their opposites in the ancient past."[57] The popularity of Tibetan Buddhism, Lopez suggests, may indicate a longing for magic and mystery in a still enchanted region of the world.[58] Marks of the postmodern, McMahan says, include "multiple interpretations of tradition, increasing pluralism, and heterogeneous combining of various modernities and traditions."[59] All of which points to more buddhisms in the future rather than to a one size fits all teaching of the dhamma.

Here in Thailand, thinkers and researchers are discovering that the centralized Sangha bureaucracy, a product of 19th century reforms, has failed to prevent religious diversity and heteropraxy at the local level. Just as provincial Thais have been politically contesting internal colonization by Bangkok, monks and laypeople are taking back their faith. "Uniform or standard Buddhism is a thing of the past," declares Phra Paisal Visalo. "Thai Buddhism is returning to diversity again."[60] Pattana Kitarsa, who has studied popular spirit cults in Thailand and the profusion of deities on spirit shrines, writes that the "harmonious coexistence of deities from diverse religious traditions, ranging from Buddha to local and royal spirits, indicates a degree of transgression of the existing religious hierarchy and order."[61] Michael Parnwell and Martin Seeger, two researchers studying "relocalization" of popular Buddhism in Thailand, see that "at the local level many of the vital signs are quite strong" despite a crisis in the institution as a whole "beset by problems of scandal, corruption, commercialization and declining authority."[62] In a recent essay, Phra Anil Sakya concludes that, "With the onset of modernity and its profound social changes, surprisingly animistic expressions of Buddhism are flourishing and apparently on the increase."[63]

---

[55] *Jayarava's Raves*, "Rescuing the Dhamma from Fundamentalists," July 8, 2011.

[56] Swearer, Donald K., *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*, 2nd ed., Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1995; 2009, p. 199.

[57] McMahan, op cit, p. 246.

[58] Ibid., p. 247.

[59] Ibid., p. 249.

[60] Visalo, Phra Paisal, "Buddhism for the Next Century," in *Socially Engaged Buddhism for the Next Millennium*, Bangkok: Santhirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, 1999, p. 10; quoted in Michael Parnwell and Martin Seeger, "The Relocalization of Buddhism in Thailand," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 83.

[61] Kitarsa, Pattana, "Beyond Syncretism: Hybridization of Popular Religion in Contemporary Thailand," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 36 (3), 2005, p. 485.

[62] Parnwell and Seeger, op cit, p. 153.

[63] Sakaya, Ven. Anil, "Contextualizing Thai Buddhism," draft of unpublished paper for Korea-Thai Buddhist Cultural Forum 2010, Gyeongju Hilton Hotel, Korea, April 1-2, 2010, p. 14.

At the annual Day of Vesak celebration and conference held by my university, several thousand Buddhists from all over the world representing most traditions gather for three days of talks and ceremonies. The monks and nuns in their many-colored robes and the lay people speaking a Babel of languages is most impressive. The large hall at Wang Noi is certainly a big tent able to hold all views and opinions of the dhamma despite significant differences. One big difference, however, is the respect accorded the Thai monarchy. Nowhere else is royalty so intertwined with religion. One delegate describe it critically as “the Thaification of Buddhism.” But at least religious imagery and devotional ceremonies were on display, unlike in the West where perhaps, in their zeal to purge Buddhism of Asian rituals and superstition, the baby might indeed get tossed out with the bathwater.

The simplest way to unify Buddhism would be to say, with Thomas Tweed, that “Buddhists are those who say they are.”[64] But I believe this is too easy, and fails to respect the tradition as well as those innovators who have attempted to reinterpret the teaching of the dhamma in new places for new times. I would like to propose three strategies for unifying the disparate buddhisms I have discussed in this paper that would honor the complexity of tradition and the sincerity of its followers. These are the categories of conversation, family resemblance and polyphony. Each resists any attempts to consolidate conflicting views by declaring one or another to be the only true Buddhism faithful to the founder’s vision. This was the technique of a modernism that served to colonize the ideas of the powerful. In a postmodern world, differences are allowed to flourish and even grow.

The Day of Vesak gatherings demonstrate the value of dialogue and conversation. For Robert H. Scharf, Buddhism as a conversation “has been going on now for over two thousand years.” Participation is dependant on having a grasp of fundamentals, literature, philosophy, rituals and discipline.

> It is a conversation about what it is to be a human being: why we suffer, how we can resolve our suffering, what works, what doesn’t, and so forth. These are big issues, and whichever one you choose to look at, you are not going to find a single Buddhist position. There have always been different positions, and these would be debated and argued. But all parties to the debate were presumed to share a common religious culture -- a more or less shared world of texts, ideas practices -- without which there could be no real conversation.[65]

Another approach would be to use the notion of “family resemblance” developed by philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Rather than look for essential features in something we are investigating, such as “religion” or “Buddhism,” different practices that may be connected by overlapping similarities where no common feature dominates. His primary example was of games which we recognize even though they might be very different. Jay L. Garfield suggests that:

> …a study of diverse cultural forms reveals a great diversity among Buddhist practices, doctrines, art forms and ways of life. But one is struck by the underlying family resemblance between these forms and the ease of communication between practitioners and scholars of these forms. There is no *prima facie* reason to suspect any greater discontinuity between these disparate Buddhist traditions than we observe within any other families of religious or philosophical positions.[66]

---

[64] Tweed, Thomas A., “Night-Stand Buddhist and Other Creatures,” in Prebish, C. and M. Baumann, eds., *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, p. 24.

[65] Scharf, Robert H., “Losing Our Religion,” *Tricycle* Summer 2007.

[66] Garfield, Jay L., “Buddhist Studies, Buddhist Practice and the Trope of Authenticity,” Draft dated 9/20/11, http://www.slideshare.net/zqonline/buddhist-studies-buddhist-practice-and-the-trope-of-authenticity.

The final category I would suggest to unify and harmonize the various buddhisms would be polyphony, a term the Russian semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin borrowed from music to describe literature that incorporated different voices without harmonizing them in order to let the characters take on lives of their own. He used this term to analyze the works of Fyodor Dostoevsky.[67] Stephen Batchelor captures this idea when he says multiple voices can be heard in the Pali canon, "some apparently contradicting others. In part, this is because the Buddha taught dialogically, addressing the needs of different audiences, rather than imposing a single one-size-fits-all doctrine."

In conclusion, I hope I've argued persuasively that the various schools and traditions, old and new, that owe their genesis and inspiration to a legendary figure called the Buddha and the teachings recorded over two thousand years by his followers, can be recognized through "family resemblances" and can communicate through conversation despite their differences. The annual Day of Vesak celebrations bear witness to that possibility. And the numerous online blogs, web sites and message boards today make global exchanges a reality.

What I hope to have shown and celebrated in this essay is the appealing diversity of "buddhisms," a cornucopia of old and new practices and interpretations that owe their impetus to the reported teachings of a legendary renunciant who roamed 2,500 years ago in the foothills of the Himalayas. Like Bakhtin and Batchelor, I hear the story told by the admirers of the Buddha's teachings as a glorious babel and want to imagine a "big tent" in which they can all reside and speak.

[67] Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

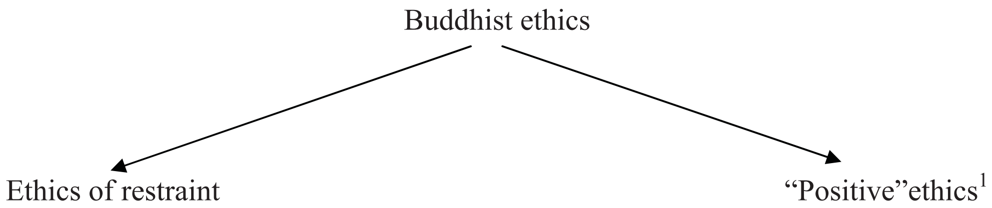
Warnings from the Past, Hope for the Future: The Ethical-Philosophical Unity of Buddhist Traditions

Justin S. Whitaker, M.A.
Ph.D. Candidate, Goldsmiths, University of London

There are many principles that one could say lie at the core of Buddhist thought throughout history: not-self, impermanence, and dependent-origination to name a few. Yet none is as far reaching or significant for the history of Buddhism or its contemporary and future practitioners as ethics. In this paper I will propose that ethics, in the form of both scrutiny of behavior and abstract thinking about behavior (descriptive and normative ethics), can stand as a common unifying factor for Buddhists around the world today.

For some people educated in Buddhism this may seem like an impossible task. After all, Buddhists from different schools all undertake different standards of behavior, from the long *Pātimokkha* vows of Theravādin monks to the pithy Bodhisattva vows of many Mahāyāna traditions that allow seemingly any behavior whatsoever in the pursuit of freeing sentient beings from suffering. Some Buddhists take up robe and bowl and live secluded lives in forests or monasteries, and others take wives or consorts and travel the villages and caves of the Himalayas, Wutai Shan, and other famed mountains. And that is just the monastics. The laity around the world have such varying degrees of observance of ethical rules that it may seem impossible to find common ground. And yet to many, especially those who know very little about Buddhism, it often does look "all the same." Buddhism as a whole is often thought to be a peaceful and benevolent religion. We have many outstanding Buddhist leaders to thank for this: H.H. the Dalai Lama, Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, and Sulak Sivaraksa to name just a few. These great leaders, along with monastics and laity of all traditions, do exhibit some fundamentally similar traits.

In this paper I will trace out what I think are the two streams of Buddhist ethics: one which focuses on ethics as rules such as the five precepts (*panca-sīla*) or Monastic Discipline (*Vinaya*), and another stream based in the four Divine Abidings, with emphasis on loving-kindness and compassion.



[1] A visual representation of splitting Buddhist ethics into two component parts.

The flow of those streams will be traced in the widest possible trajectory, touching on their place in Early Buddhism by way of the Pāli Canon, Tibetan Buddhism with a discussion of the important Samye Debate, Japanese Zen in the life and teachings of Dōgen, and finally a mention of some issues facing Buddhism today around the world. And as I, a scholar of Buddhist ethics and Western Buddhism coming from the "Wild West" of the United States, am now writing for a conference in Thailand, sure to be read by scholars and venerable sangha members who are renowned for their preservation of early Buddhism, we may imagine these two great streams of Buddhist ethics having come full circle.

Buddhism as a religion is often lauded as being one of the most ethical in nature.[2] And so there is perhaps a certain irony in the fact that ethics itself is a rather elusive category within the writings passed down by Buddhist traditions. While all traditions have extensive writings on moral behavior, as well as a great deal of work in what we would today call moral psychology, nowhere is there developed a thorough and sustained analysis of moral behavior. This has left many wondering what kind of ethics or ethical system Buddhism might have. Contemporary thinkers such as Damien Keown (2001) and Charles Goodman (2009) are working to change this by suggesting that Buddhist ethics are Aristotelian or Consequentialist in nature. The work of these scholars and others has helped bring attention to a topic which is fundamental to Buddhism, yet often misunderstood in the contemporary world. As Keown correctly states, "Buddhism is a response to what is fundamentally an ethical problem – the perennial problem of the best kind of life for man to lead" (p.1, 2001).

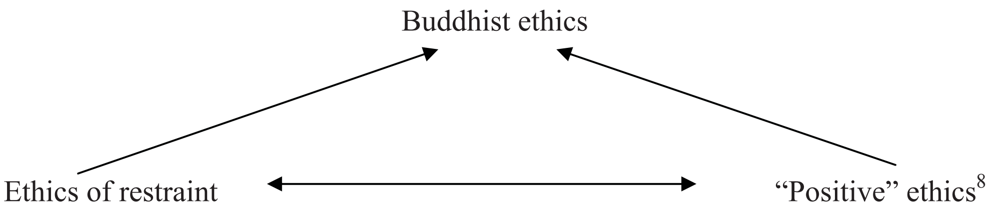
The most obvious place to look for ethics in early Buddhism is *sīla*, which Rhys Davids and Steede defined as "1. nature, character, habit, behaviour; 2. moral practice, good character, Buddhist ethics, code of morality." The *pañcasīla* they further describe as "a sort of preliminary condition to any higher development after conforming to the teaching of the Buddha (*saraṇaŋgamana*) and as such often mentioned when a new follower is 'officially' installed…"[3] Perhaps a favorite discussion of sīla comes in the Vissudhimagga, where Buddhaghosa suggests that the etymology of the term derives from aspects of *sira* (head) and *sīta* (cool),[4] drawing at least the modern reader to think of the moral person as one who keeps a cool head. Such a metaphor would not have been lost on the Buddha's or Buddhaghosa's contemporaries, either, as the image of fire as central to the problem of the human condition and *nibbāna* (extinguishing) as *the* solution, run throughout the Buddha's teachings.[5]

The other stream of early Buddhist ethical thought is what Richard Gombrich labels "Buddha's Positive Values." Focusing on *mettā*, Gombrich holds that the *brahmavihāras* taught by the Buddha have the power to bring about liberation in the practitioner. As he puts it, "the Buddha saw love and compassion as means to salvation – in his terms, to the attainment of nirvana" (2009, p.76). This is an argument Gombrich has made in previous works as well,[6] based on close analysis of early Buddhist texts as well as Upanishads (namely the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka and Chāndogya) that the Buddha was likely familiar with and responding to. I will not retrace his argument here, but instead direct you to the Tevijja Sutta (DN 13), where the notion that *mettā* and the other three Divine Abidings can lead one to union with *Brahman* is introduced. And I would suggest, as Gombrich does, that the Buddha

[2] Keown, 2001, p. 1.
[3] Rhys Davids & Stede, 1921, p. 713.
[4] Chapter 1.17, p.11 in Ñaṇamoli.
[5] Cf. Gombrich 2009, chapter 8, "Everything Is Burning: The Centrality of Fire in the Buddha's Thought."
[6] Cf. *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* (1996) pp. 58-64 and *Kindness and Compassion as Means to Nirvana* (1998).

is appropriating the notion of abiding with *Brahman* from his religious context and (perhaps not too) subtly changing the meaning to fit his unique ends, just as he did when he slipped in the audacious comment, "it is intention, oh monks, that I call karma" (AN 6.63).[7]

Buddhist ethics



These two streams of Buddhist ethics, though analyzed into separate parts, mutually reinforce one another to form the basis the practitioner's life and indeed the whole of Buddhism. As Peter Harvey states:

> In terms of the division of the Path into virtue, meditation and wisdom (always given in this order), the Path can be seen to develop as follows. Influenced and inspired by good examples, a person's first commitment will be to develop virtue, a generous and self-controlled way of life for the benefit of self and others. To motivate this, he or she will have some degree of preliminary wisdom, in the form of some acquaintance with the Buddhist outlook and an aspiration to apply it, expressed as *saddhā*, trustful confidence or faith. With virtue as the indispensable basis for further progress, some meditation may be attempted. With appropriate application, this will lead to the mind becoming calmer, stronger and clearer. This will allow experiential understanding of the *Dhamma* to develop, so that deeper wisdom arises. From this, virtue is strengthened, becoming a basis for further progress in meditation and wisdom. Accordingly, it is said that wisdom and virtue support each other like two hands washing each other (D. I.124).[9]

Damien Keown, also emphasizing the central role of ethics in Buddhist soteriology, holds that, "The goal, then, is not simply the attainment of an intellectual vision of reality or the mastery of doctrine (although it includes these things) but primarily the *living* of a full and rounded human life" (2001, p.1). Just as the ethics of Buddhism has two branches, the constraints and the positive virtues, the fulfillment of the Buddhist ethical life takes place in two spheres, the social and the universal, or Dharmic. The enlightened master may be judged (either correctly or not) as insufficient or immoral by social standards, but cannot be spoken of *at all* in the universal sphere. As the Buddha stated, "The Buddha-sphere of the Buddhas is an unthinkable that is not to be thought [or perhaps "speculated"] about, that would bring madness and vexation to anyone who thought about it" (AN 4.77, cf SN 44.2).[10]

---

[7] *Cetanā ahaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vicati.*

[8] A visual representation of the two aspects of Buddhist ethics interrelating and forming the whole of Buddhist ethics.

[9] 2000, p.41.

[10] *Buddhānaṃ bhikkhave buddhavisayo acinteyyo na cintetabbo, yaṃ cintento ummādassa vighātassa bhāgī assa.*

It is with growing emphasis on this unthinkable Buddha-sphere (in the form of concepts such as *śūnyatā, tathāgatagharba*, sudden enlightenment, and others) as well as movement into new cultures that Mahāyāna Buddhists re-opened the traditional thought on ethics. Yet despite certain changes in direction in early Mahāyāna away from mainstream Buddhism, Vasubandhu, the highly influential author of the *Abhidharma*-kośa (and its commentary, the *Abhidharma*-kośa-bhāsya) still found a similar etymological understanding of *śīla* as would be later expressed by Buddhaghosa (cited above). The root śī, he explains, means "refreshing" and "morality is pleasant; because of that the body does not burn" (Keown, 2001, p.49).

To suggest further directions of discussion in the realm of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is immense in both socio-cultural and textual terms, I wish to introduce just two important historical cases. The first is the Samye (Bsam yas) Debate, said to have taken place in Tibet around 797 C.E (Dalton, 2004). While the historical facts of the debate, and even whether such a debate even actually occurred, are disputed, it nonetheless later served as a pivotal moment in Tibetan Buddhist understanding and practice. The second case is the development of Dōgen's complex relationship with the precepts. Both cases demonstrate that as Buddhism enters each new culture, it is taken up by a variety of interests and thus interpreted in multiple, often conflicting, ways. I will conclude by suggesting that many of the same things are happening today as Buddhism integrates into Western societies.

The Samye Debate stands out in Tibetan cultural memory as the decisive moment in which the nation, through its king Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde btsan, r. 755 – 797), chose India Mahāyāna Buddhism, represented by Kamalaśīla, over Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism, represented by Huashang Moheyan. According to tradition:

> The most important matters of doctrine in which Hva-shang differed from his Indian rival were (1) the attainment of Buddhaship does not take place slowly as the result of a protracted and onerous moral struggle for understanding, but suddenly and intuitively--an idea which is characteristic of the Chinese Ch'an and of the Japanese Zen sect which derives from it; (2) meritorious actions whether of word or deed, and, indeed, any spiritual striving, is evil; on the contrary one must relieve one's mind of all deliberate thought and abandon oneself to complete inactivity (Roccaslavo, p.508).

He thus denied the efficacy of both the constraints and the positive virtues of Buddhism. Kamalaśīla ridiculed Huashang's beliefs as destructive to Buddhism itself, instead advocating a gradual path based on the three-fold trainings in ethics, meditation, and wisdom. Winning the debate, Kamalaśīla revived the Buddha's ideal of the path to awakening and the necessity of ethics as its foundation. However, the tension between the gradual path and Mahāyāna concepts such as *śūnyatā, tathāgatagharba* and others (mentioned above) continued to play itself out in Tibetan Buddhism, and the possible influence of Ch'an Buddhism on the Tibetan practices of rDzogs chen and Mahamudra is still a matter of scholarly discussion. The other ethically questionable side of Tibetan Buddhism in terms of potentially antinomian practices is tantra and the whole of the Vajrayāna, addressed by Gombrich as follows:

> I think we can safely say that for about a thousand years Buddhism in India was antithetical to tantra…Firstly, Buddhism cultivated self-control in general, and in particular meditative states in which self-awareness is gradually enhanced to the point of total self-knowledge…

> Secondly, Buddhism *per se*, being unconcerned with worldly matters, did not recognize brahminical concepts of impurity… Thirdly, Buddhism was never antinomian and under no circumstances could normal morality be transcended… Buddhist tantra is paradoxical Buddhism and has turned the tradition on its head in a way that deserves the label of syncretism. But it has been recolonized by Buddhist ethics: its purposes are never immoral, but the allegorical dramas enacted in Buddhist ritual and visualized by its practitioners always witness the triumph of good over evil, and are interpreted as leading to Enlightenment. In other words, what makes the Vajrayāna Buddhist is its ethics (1996, p.163-4).

These claims are supported by (and likely at least in part based on) anthropological field-work amongst Vajrayāna practitioners. Gellner cites Nepali scholar Asha Kaji Vajracharya stating that "In the Tantras, if one follows the literal meaning of the Sanskrit text and ignores the 'intentional' language not only will one's rite be unsuccessful, afterwards one will go mad" (1992, p. 298). Gellner, based on years living with Vajrayāna Buddhists in Nepal, agrees that "This represents the normal view of the learned minority acquainted with the Tantric scriptures. (All others are simply unaware of their antinomian contents.)" (ibid.). If this understanding can work for tantric Buddhism, or Vajrayāna, it should also hold for Zen, often also thought of as an antinomian Buddhist tradition. The emphases on 'just sitting' and koans that cannot be solved by the conceptual mind lead many to believe that the entire tradition somehow goes beyond ethics or pays moral behavior no particular attention. However, this is very much mistaken, as a comparison of the life and works of the best known Zen master, Dōgen (1200 – 1253, founder of the Sōtō Zen school), and one of his contemporaries in Japan, Nōnin (founder of the short-lived Daruma Zen school), will show.

As I am not a Zen scholar, I rely primarily on a recent work by Steven Heine entitled "Dōgen and the Precepts Revisited."[11] Heine begins the article with the quote "When doing zazen, what precepts are not upheld, and what merits are not produced?" (Dōgen, Shōbōgenzō zuimonki). Part of the brilliance of the statement, of course, is that it can be taken two ways. One may interpret it as Dōgen upholding the importance of the precepts by claiming that they are inherent in his most important Zen practice, zazen. On the other hand one could read this line as a blithe dismissal of precepts as a category of Buddhist thought or practice because, after all, they're already taken care of when one does the all-important zazen practice. So is Dōgen extolling the precepts or dismissing them?

It helps to place Dōgen's statement in context with another early Japanese Buddhist teacher, Nōnin. Founding the Daruma school in the 1180s, Nōnin stepped dangerously into antinomian territory with such statements as, "There are no practices [to follow], no cultivation [to engage in]. From the outset there are no mental defilements; from the beginning we are enlightened."[12] On the other hand, Dōgen's concern seems not to have been with the precepts *per se*, but with the relation between the social and universal spheres of Buddhist ethical life, again influenced by Mahāyāna's philosophical interest in concepts that could represent the deepest nature of conceivable reality. Heine states, "From the standpoint of absolute or ultimate truth, there is a full internalization of the precepts, which altogether vitiates the need for external guidelines expressed in the *Prātimokṣa* or allows them to be seen merely as a kind of metaphorical reflection of what is essentially an interior

---

[11] In *Buddhist Studies from India to America: Essays in Honor of Charles S. Prebish*, pp.9-27.

[12] In Heine, p.15, where he notes that it is from "an unpublished paper by Ishii, 1992, who points out that Nōnin's attitude was influenced by early Ch'an but resembles Southern school utterances such as "Mind itself is Buddha" attributed to Ma-tsu." The ties with Chinese Buddhism and its many varieties are too complex for the current essay but certainly deserve closer attention.

state of mind" (p.16). It was *through* and *in* zazen that Dōgen felt the precepts would be fully internalized, thus suggesting a more favorable explanation to his statement above.

Heine provides the following chart comparing the priorities of Dōgen and Eisai, the founder of Japan's Rinzai (from the Chinese Linji) School of Buddhism (p.18).

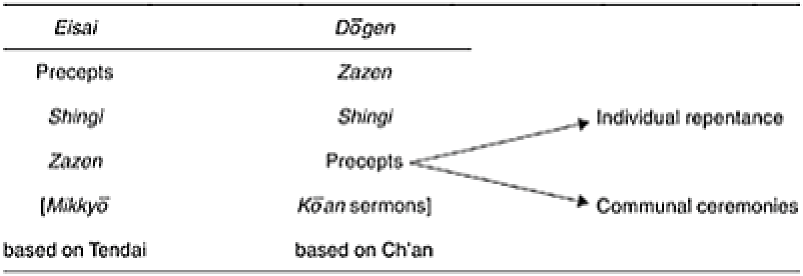


Figure 1.2 Comparison of Eisai's and Dōgen's religious priorities.

As we can see, the placement of Zazen and Precepts are reversed in the two, but both place great importance on the *Shingi*, or monastic conduct code, comparable to the traditional Vinaya rules. The fourth item on the list notes the central priority of each in terms of practice, Mikkyō referring to esoteric teachings first established in Japan by Saichō (767 – 822). Nōnin, in contrast, did not give consistent recommendations in any of these areas, in fact suggesting the ability to abandon precepts, zazen, and Vinaya (without supplementing with *Shingi* or a similar code). His sect was proscribed by the government not long after its formation, in 1194, and disappeared completely in 1241 when the last of its monks joined Dōgen's Sōtō Zen sect (Heine, p.15). Eschewing all clear moral direction in favor of the nonduality of the ultimate sphere of Buddhist ethics no doubt helped bring about Daruma Zen's downfall. In addition to his lack of clarity in rules of conduct, Nōnin also had problems that were structural or political in nature. As Heine reports, "Since Nōnin did not travel to China and therefore did not receive direct Dharma transmission from a Ch'an master, the Buddhist institutional hierarchy never considered his self-enlightenment-based credentials acceptable" (p.17). Furthermore, his choice of texts was unpopular, along with his allegiance to the Northern Bodhidharma-based School of Ch'an (while the Southern School was more accepted in Japan at the time), both also contributed to his inability to secure widespread support for his new school. Each of these represents a failure to recognize and adhere to the social sphere of Buddhist ethics. Dōgen, on the other hand, grappled consistently with the tensions between (in Mahāyāna terms) "[Theravada]" precepts and Mahāyāna Bodhisattva vows, as well as importance of strict monastic observances:

> "Of the ninety or more chapters of the *Shōbō genzō*," Martin Collcutt notes, "nearly a third are devoted wholly or in part to the detailed regulation of such everyday monastic activities as meditation, prayer, study, sleep, dress, the preparation and taking of meals, and bathing and purification."[13] Therefore, the relatively lesser weight ascribed to the precepts by Dōgen does not indicate a lack of strictness or a tendency toward Nōnin-esque antinomianism (Heine, p.23).

[13] Collcutt, Martin (1981) Five Mountains: The Rinzai Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p.148.

This isn't to suggest that Buddhism rises and falls on public opinion. Indeed, just as Buddhism has changed with each new culture it has entered, it has also changed each culture. Today we confront the arrival of Buddhism to the West and the important role it can play in the maturation of global ethical sensibilities. However, to do this successfully will require that Buddhists take up renewed diligence in not only following the moral rules of their respective tradition, but also developing the positive virtues. I turn once again to Richard Gombrich, who addressed the International Conference on Dissemination of Theravāda Buddhism in the 21st Century, held in Salaya, Bangkok, Sep/Oct 2010. In that address, he urged Theravādins to reexamine internal principles such as the inequality of women in the sangha, as well as inter-Buddhist issues such as disrespect for Mahāyāna Buddhists for behavior such as eating after midday, and finally inter-religious and inter-ethnic concerns such as the monastic support for the war in Sri Lanka.[14] Of course these may appear to be bold demands coming from a person outside of the Buddhist tradition, but they rest upon the keen observations of a scholar with over 40 years of experience in the field, and they also reveal how Westerners more broadly are beginning to see Buddhism. In 1998, Brian (Daizen) Victoria published *Zen at War*, and three years later the (hitherto silent), "leaders of Myoshin-ji, the headquarters temple of one of Japan's main Zen sects, issued a public apology for its complicity in Japanese militarism..." (Keown, 2005, p.75). In 2003 Victoria continued with *Zen War Stories*, in which he concluded that, "Japan's wartime Zen leaders revealed themselves to be *thoroughly and completely morally corrupt*" (ibid., emphasis in the original).

Buddhism in its historically native countries is no longer isolated from the scrutiny and criticism of Western scholars or the Western public. In 2010 the critique of Zen was expanded to the whole of Buddhism with Jerryson and Jurgensmeyer's book *Buddhist Warfare*, a collection of essays discussing Buddhist connections with violence across traditions, and indeed Buddhism and War has become a topic worthy of entire college courses.[15] At the same time, cases of corruption, sexual and other forms of abuse have reached Western shores.

The still very positive general perception of Buddhism is in danger of becoming increasingly tarnished. This is in large part why I urge a turn to fundamental ethical principles as a foundation for Buddhist traditions. That turn, while respecting social context, must in part be to simple universal Buddhist truths such as the centrality of intention and hence individual moral responsibility. It is in this return to the basics preserved in all traditions that one can hope for meaningful ecumenical discussions, both amongst Buddhist traditions and beyond, on specific elements of the three stages, 1) our current condition, as assessed by different traditions, 2) methods of training, both monastic and lay, and 3) the reality and nature of liberation in this world.[16]

It is that "current condition, as assessed by different traditions" that I take to constitute the discussion of ethics. Our textual traditions will play a role in that discussion, but so will an opening up to the "global village" that constitutes our lives today. Age old prejudices and accepted inequalities are losing their grip on one society after another. And those whose morality fails to adequately bring the wisdom of tradition and reality of the current world together are likely to be kicked out, as Huashang Moheyan was from Tibet, or simply forgotten, as Nōnin was for much of Japan's history. Let us hope that none of us, as either scholars or practitioners, suffer such a fate.

[14] Gombrich, "Comfort or Challenge?"

[15] I know of at least one, being taught in Spring 2012 at Penn State University (RLST 497D, "Buddhism and Warfare").

[16] These are based on the three-part scheme of sīla, samādhi, and paññā, but I wish to broaden the categories in order to avoid pulling in cultural or textual baggage which might limit the discussion.

References:

Dalton, J. (2004). BSAM YAS DEBATE. In R. E. Buswell (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (pp. 69-71). New York: Macmillan.

Gellner, D. (1992). *Monk, Householder, & Tantric Priest*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Gombrich, R. (1996). *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings.* London: The Athlone Press.

Gombrich, R. (2009). *What the Buddha Thought*. London: Equinox.

Gombrich, R. (2010). "Comfort or Challenge?" address to the International Conference on Dissemination of Theravāda Buddhism in the 21st Century, Salaya, Bangkok, Sep/Oct 2010. Available online at www.ocbs.org.

Goodman, C. (2009). *Consequences of Compassion: An Interpretation and Defense of Buddhist Ethics*. New York: Oxford.

Harvey, P. (2000). *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Heine, S. (2006). Dōgen and the Precepts Revisited. In D. Keown, (ed.), *Buddhist Studies from India to America: Essays in Honor of Charles S. Prebish* (pp.9-27). Oxon: Routledge.

Keown, D. (2001). *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*. New York: Palgrave.

Keown, D. (2005). *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ñaṇamoli, B. (trans.) (2011). *The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga,* Colombo: Buddhist Publication Society.

Rhys Davids, T., & Stede, H. (1921). *The Pali-English dictionary.* Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass.

Roccasalvo, J.F. (1980). "The Debate at bSam yas: Religious Contrast and Correspondence" in *Philosophy East and West* vol. 30:4, pp.505-520.

Thanissaro B. (trans.) (2010). "Anuradha Sutta: To Anuradha" (SN 44.2). Access to Insight, 1 July 2010, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn44/sn44.002.than.html. Retrieved on 20 October 2011.

Thanissaro B. (trans.) (2010). "Kathavatthu Sutta: Topics of Conversation (1)" (AN 10.69). Access to Insight, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an10/an10.069.than.html . Retrieved on 20 October 2011.

Theravada and Mahayana: Parallels, Connections and Unifying Concepts

Dr. Jinabodhi Bhikkhu

Buddhism comprises divergent schools of thought and world-view. Amidst this spectrum of philosophical tenets, the most widely known and representative schools are Theravada and Mahayana. Scholars and researchers most often tend to view these schools as schisms and highlight differences between them. Although contrasting elements are prominent and readily identifiable tenets, it is affinities and common features in them that are more worthy of examination. It is the points of resemblance and common grounds that will serve to unify philosophical views and forge solidarity among Buddhist communities of the world.

The elements and features that are common in both traditions can be enumerated as follows. Mahayana and Theravada are both dedicated and committed to well-being of oneself and all the sentient beings of the universe. Liberation from suffering is the goal of both. The orientation of Theravada is ethical while that of Mahayana is ethical and metaphysical. The Pure Land sect of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy assigns no fixed path to its followers and devotees. Hence, there are scopes to adapt to, and adopt some of the tenets of Theravada by practitioners of Mahayana.

The Pure Land sect of Mahayana emphasizes faith. Such emphasis on faith is noticeable in Theravada as well. One of the ten qualities of *paramita* or perfection leading to the exalted state of *Arhat* or Buddhahood is resolution, which is impossible to attain without faith. In both Mahayana and Theravada the ideal saint is called the *Arhat,* who has annihilated all passions and desires. In Mahayana the *Arhat* embodies Buddha nature, more keen on salvation of others than his own salvation.

The doctrine of *Pratitya Samutpada* or conditionality and dependent origination of beings is central to the canonical text of Theravada *Abhidhammapitaka.* Nagarjuna, the founding figure of Mahayana, prominently analyses this concept of conditionality and dependent origination in his treatise *Madhamnika –Karika* and pays a glowing tribute to the Buddha as the teacher of the doctrine of *Pratitya Samutpada.* Nagarjuna, the exponent of Mahayana, has identified the law of causation with the highest truth. Theravada emphasises this as well.

Another aspect of Buddhist philosophy is eradication of impure, unwholesome desires that appears in the doctrines of both Theravada and Mahayana. The Pali term for faith is *saddha,* a mental attribute that is faith in the Buddha's enlightenment. The doctrine of *karma* considers it a wholesome state of mind indispensable to attain the first stage of holiness, *sotapatti* - when a Buddhist devotee with unwavering faith breaks the fetter of doubt. Faith equips mind with confidence and determination necessary to cross the sea of *Samsara*. An ideal Buddhist can balance faith with wisdom. Noble disciples of the Buddha are termed the faith–devoted (*Saddhanusari* in Pali) and faith-liberated (*Saddha-Vimutta* in Pali). The canonical text of *Visuddhi Magga* refers to noble person as a faith-devotee or faith-liberated one. Examination of faith can be a common ground to correlate Theravada and Mahayana.

The notion of *nirvana,* extinction of desire clinging to existence expressed in Theravada and Mahayana, implies certain parallel views. In Theravada, *nirvana* is conceived of as freedom from desire and delusion. In Mahayana nirvana is attainment of perfection of knowledge that results from extinction of delusion stressed in Theravada. Thus nirvana, in both philosophical traditions, is conditional on absolute freedom from delusion. Since Mahayana is more liberal and open-ended than Theravada it can encompass many ideas and insights of Theravada system of belief.

Buddhists believe in the unity of all human beings. Hence, it should be their moral obligation to treat Theravada and Mahayana as traditions not mutually exclusive or incompatible versions of Buddhism. Instead, their aim should be to identify aspects shared by these two traditions as complementary and allied schools in order to unify diverse and divergent Buddhist philosophical views.

The history of the Buddhism is the chronicle of its expansion and ramifications into two major schools such as Theravada and Mahayana. The ethical and philosophical teachings of the Buddha assumed two distinct forms of Buddhism such as Theravada and Mahayana during the rule of King Koniskha of Kushan dynasty; but the leading Buddhist scholars, thinkers and social activists of the present century realize the necessity of forging a new order of understanding, affinity, fraternity, co-existence, unity and harmony. They are keen to put substantial emphasis on synthesis of two doctrines and tenets, highlighting the common features and principles on which the noble edifice of Buddhism rests. This modern tendency might be viewed as Buddhist liberalism aimed to unite the segregated sects and schools of Buddhism in order to endure and flourish against the proliferation of antagonistic, alien faiths, creeds and religious Buddhist communities. As the influential Buddhist scholar P.V. Bapat holds, “Buddhism is a religion of kindness, humanity and equality.” (India and Buddhism, 1976, p.1) It is imperative for us to reconcile the differences between two schools and forge closer links between them.

The major point of differences between Theravada and Mahayana is the ideal of the Arahant, the enlightenment of the disciple esteemed in Theravada and the ideal of Buddhahood attainable by all, emphasized in Mahayana. Despite the two different ultimate goals of enlightenment, the adherents of Buddhism can meet and work together bearing in mind the spirit of the fraternity, kinship, harmony and solidarity of world Buddhism. The two distinct ideals of Arhathood (of Theravada) and Buddhahood (of Mahayana) need not prove a permanent insurmountable barrier or barricade between the followers of two schools of Buddhism. The success of this endeavour depends on the change of attitude and mind-set among the practitioners and devotees of Buddhism. To use the parlance of Business Studies, the two sects should make equal efforts to come out of their individual cocoons of isolation, segregation and common ground to form a joint venture or merger of religious enterprises.

There are certain differences of doctrinal tenets between Theravada and Mahayana that can be glossed over in order to achieve the unity and harmony of World Buddhism. One such doctrinal point of differences is the view of pragga held by the followers of Theravada and pragga as conceived by the adherents of Mahayana. Pragga is the most esteemed goal to attain Nirvana among Theravada Buddhists; but the Mahayana community associates pragga with compassion. Pragga without compassion for suffering beings is valueless in Mahayana. This point of divergence regarding pragga should not create too wide a gap to heal between the devotees of Theravada and Mahayana. Mahayana is more liberal and flexible in its ideological framework, allowing a scope of homage

to a multitude deities and divinities like Avalokiteshawra, Manjusree, Padmapari. Such practice of homage to deities is thought to be alien to Buddhism among the followers of Theravada. This point of difference could also be disregarded in order to achieve greater harmony and solidarity.

Another point of difference between Theravada and Mahayana is the trikaya theory or the concept of the three bodies or aspects of Buddha (Buddha as eternal universal consciousness, Buddha as the body of bliss and Buddha as the body of transformation) as conceptualized in the latter branch of Buddhism. If this concept of trinity is interpreted in figurative, metaphorical and symbolic terms, this point of disagreement can easily be overcome to reach the necessary stage of amity and harmony.

Another point of departure is deification of Buddha by Mahayanists. Mahayana has exalted Mahayana. Buddhahood to a supramundane theistic position while Theravada tries to maintain an atheistic view of Buddha as a historical human figure. But the followers of Theravada and Mahayana need not remain eternally locked and trapped by the doctrinal rigidities, intricacies and complexes of each sect. Wherever differences prove to be an obstacle they should veer into a sphere of accommodation, adjustment and flexibility.

The Mahasanghikas, the precursor of Mahayana, demonstrated their differential entity in their rejection of the canonical texts of the Parivara, the Patisambhida, the Niddesa and parts of the Jataka approved in the First Council of Theravadins. The Mahasanghikas codified their own five-part canons viz.: the Sutra, the Vinaya, the Abhidharma, the Dharanis and Miscellaneous. Another point of divergence between the Mahayanists and the Theravadins is the concept of the Middle Path (Modhyma-pratipat). In Theravada, the Middle Path refers to a life of moderation avoiding extremes of self-mortification or inordinate sensual indulgences; but in the Madhyamika metaphysical system which is a branch of Mahayana, the middle path signifies a theory of relativity, neither reality nor unreality of the world, neither existence, nor non-existence, neither self nor non-self. In spite of these disagreements both the Mahayanists and the Theravadins accept and uphold the basic and essential principles of Buddhism such as the four noble truths, the eightfold path, the non-existence of the soul, the theory of karma, the theory of pratitya-samudpada and thirty-seven Bodhipaksiya–dharmas.

These common principles shared by the two leading schools of Buddhism should provide adequate support to bridge the gap and bring them closer than before to fashion a new order or world Buddhism. If they stress more on common ideas than on differences, they will render a signal service to the urgently-need, long-awaited emergence of World Buddhism, a harmonious synthesis of all schools, sects and denominations of Buddhism.

Theravada and Mahayana differ only in metaphysical, philosophical and transcendental topics and not in spirit. Both are dedicated to well-being of one self and all the sentient beings of the universe. Since Buddhists believe in the unity all human beings, it should not be daunting and forbidding to perceive a common ground for agreements between the two schisms of Buddhism. As the eminent Buddhist scholar Dr. Nalinaksha Dutta observed in his discerning study *Aspect of Mahayana Buddhism and Its Relation to Hinayana*[1] (1930, p. 46), 'Throughout the long history of Buddhism unity amidst diversity is strikingly evident. Every student or adherent of Buddhism, at

[1] Editor's Footnote: Although the term has become obsolete, this usage of 'Hinayana' is in the title of an old work, produced before the landmark decision to eliminate the derogatory term during the 1950 World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference, spearheaded by the effort of Ven. Rapule Rahula – see, for instance, this – accessed on 17 November 2011: http://www.chuadieuphap.us/English_Section/essays/rahula_theravada_mahayana.asp

all times and places, admits that Buddha taught a middle path'. The tenets and principles manifest in both schools of Mahayana and Theravada may be enumerated as follows:

- Both schools try to get rid of attachment, hatred and delusion (raga, dvesa, moha). In practical sphere of life Buddhists of both schools are fighters against all kinds of evils arising out of thirst or craving (tanha).
- Both schools believe in the doctrine of the three characteristics of existence such as Anicca (impermanency), dukkhas (suffering) and Anatta (non-self, non-ego, absence of self, existing, real ego-entity or soul as some abiding substance).
- Both schools believe in complete and permanent cessation of suffering through Nirvana. Both formulated a theory of salvation. The measures, procedures, paths in both to attain salvation may vary but stress the threefold path of sila (moral training), samadhi (mental training) and praga (wisdom) as indispensible conditions to reach the ultimate destination of Nirvana. Both adopt the theories of three types of Buddha Samyat Sambuddha, Paccheka Buddha and Sravaka Buddha. Both regard Sakyamuni as Shasta. The themeof the four sublime or divine abodes such as metta (loving-kindness), karuna (compassion), mudita (altruistic joy) and upekkha (equanimity) has been treated with great importance in both schools of Buddhism.
- Both schools related the four sublime mental states with the concept of parameta (perfection- qualities that lead to Enlightenment.)

A doctrinal point that may serve to reconcile the two divergent schools of Mahayana and Theravada is the concept of parami or paramita (perfection) - compendium of ten qualities in Theravada and six perfections of Mahayana. The ten perfections are (1) dana parami (perfection of giving) (2) sila parami (morality) (3) nekkhamma (renunciation) (4) pragga (wisdom) (5) viriya (energy, vigour) (6) khanti (patience) (7) sacca (truthfulness) (8) adhitthana (resolution) (9) metta (loving kindness) (10) upekkha (equanimity). The six perfections of Mahyana include dana, sila, khanti, viriya, pragga, dhyana. The eminent Mahayanist thinker Asanga propounded four perfections of satya, bairaggya, maitree, upekkhas. The perfections of two schools of Buddhism are analogues to, and identifiable with, then paramitas of Theravada are parallel to six paramitas of Mahayana. The concept of perfections could be an area to reconcile and harmonise differences.

Affinities in point of view can be instrumental in establishing a rapport and forming an alliance between the two different, mutually detached, schools of Buddhism. Further common philosophical premises that Mahayana and Theravada share are as follows:

1. Emancipation from fetters of attachment, hatred and delusion (raga, desa, moha).
2. The cosmic universe is a continuum without beginning or end (anamataggo ayam sansara).
3. All worldy beings and objects are transient (anitya), momentary (ksanika) and are in a state of perpetual flux (samantana) and are without any real substance (anatmakam).
4. The law of causation or dependent origination, the doctrine of protitya samudpada, the conditionality and dependent nature of all unsubstantial physical and psychical phenomena or elements. In Theravada this doctrine of causation is analysed in

Dhamma-sangani and patthana (the first and last books of Abhidhamma-Pitaka). Its parallel enunciation in Mahayana is Nagarjuna's treatise Madhyamika Karika where he identifies the law of causation with the highest truth and its incarnation is Buddha.

In the words of Nagarjuna: The worldly beings and objects, which arise out of causes, do not exist in reality. One who realizes this unreality of worldly beings and objects visualizes the truth and therefore visualizes the Buddha, the embodiment of truth.

We might conclude our analysis on the theme of synthesis, harmony and unity amidst diverse schools, sects and tents of Buddhism by recalling an illuminating remark on Buddhism in his *A Short History of Buddhism* (1980, page 126) where Edward Conze views Buddhism 'as a spiritual' and 'social force'. In order to reconcile the differences and dissimilarities between Mahayana and Theravada, we should emphasize more on the spiritual, social, humanitarian aspects of universal well-being, rather than on rigid stubborn doctrinal matters. The doctrinal innovation of the Mahayana such as the switch from the Arhat-ideal of Theravada to the Bodhisatta-ideal, addition of compassion to wisdom as the noblest virtue, worship of deities, deification of Buddha, ontological view of emptiness and the introduction of a new virtue upayakausalya (skill in means) should be contained within speculative level and the polemics on these subtle, intricate issues should not be allowed to impede the bonding and closeness between two schools.

Buddha was not only a spiritual leader but also a humanist and a social reformer. During the rule of Asoka, Buddhism was put into action as practical faith helping to mould society on the principles of peaceful co-existence, religious tolerance, amity, mutual understanding, harmony and solidarity. Narada opines. 'In one sense all Buddhists are courageous warriors' (1988:648) as warriors they fight against the evil passions of lust, hatred and ignorance. The Buddha message of non-violence and peace, of love and compassion, of tolerance and understanding of truth and wisdom of respect for all life of freedom from selfishness, hatred and violence delivered over 2500 years ago still have a continuing relevance and appeal for us in this era of globalization and information technology. The Buddhist monks and laity can translate the teachings of Buddha into concrete policies, projects and programs to organize, promote and render social educational, cultural and other humanitarian services irrespective of race, creed and religion. They should concentrate on utilising modern state-of-the-art technology to minimize dissensions between Mahayana and Theravada, reconcile their certain differences of views and theories and help to a build a new global community of understanding, amity, harmony of World Buddhism and, to use the terms of Edward Conze, 'set up the World Fellowship of Buddhists' (Conze: 1980, page 104, Ashart history of Buddhism).

References:

Bapat, P.V. "India and Buddhism" in *2500 Year of Buddhism*, P.V. Bapat (ed.), Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1976.

Conze Edward. *A Short History of Buddhism*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1980.

Dutta, Nalinaksha, *Aspect of Mahayana Buddhism and Its Relation to Hinayana*, Firma KLM Private Ltd. Kolkata, 1930.

Narada, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, Buddhist Missionary Society, Malaysia, 1988.

Pratītyasamutpāda and *Śūnyatā* in *Mādhyantavibhāga*

Dr. Chaisit Suwanvarangkul
University of Otago, New Zealand

The Sanskrit terms *pratītyasamutpāda* ("dependent arising" or "dependent origination") and *śūnyatā* (emptiness) are core teachings of the Buddha, and occur in the canons of all the schools of Buddhism. Two important sources for understanding the relationship between these two Sanskrit terms – *pratītyasamutpāda* and *śūnyatā* – are the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ* in the *Avataṃsaka- sūtra* and the *Mādhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya.* The *Mādhyantavibhāga-bhāṣya* was written by Vasubandhu and is associated with the Yogācāra School. The text consists of 112 verses in five chapters, and describes the middle and extreme views. A third source, the commentary, or *ṭīkā* on the *Mādhyantavibhāga-bhāṣya*, is also important. The *ṭīkā* was composed by Sthiramati (a well-known 6th CE Indian Buddhist Scholar Monk). No complete version of the *ṭīkā* has survived in the original Sanskrit, but the Tibetan translation of the *ṭīkā* (Dbus dang mtha' rnam par 'byed pa'i 'grel bshad) has been preserved. The aim of this paper is to find out how the terms *pratītyasamutpāda* and *śūnyatā* developed and changed over time and united into one truth and also I will reconstruct the missing portions of the Sanskrit texts (*Ṭīkā*, chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda, Daśaśubhādiṣvāranam*, *saṣṭhyā*) using the Tibetan *ṭīkā* (Sgrib pa'i le'ur bcad pa, Dge ba la sogs pa rnam pa bcu la sgrib pa, drug pa).

First, I will consider the *pratītyasamutpāda* in the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ* in the *Avatamsakasūtra* in order to understand the connection from *pratītyasamutpāda* to *śūnyatā*. Next, I will consider the development from *śūnyatā* to *pratītyasamutpāda* in the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda, Daśaśubhādiṣvāraṇam* of *Yogācāra*. And finally I will consider the relationship between *pratītyasamutpāda* and *śūnyatā* in the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 1 *Abhūta-parikalpa* Stanza 1 in the *Sad-asal-lakṣaṇa.*

I From *pratītyasamutpāda* to *śūnyatā* in the sixth *bhūmi* of the *Daśa- bhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ* in the *Avatamsakasūtra*.

The sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro* mentions the *pratītyasamutpāda*, and ex- plains the relationship between the *pratītyasamutpāda* and the three doors of libera- tions (vimokṣatraya). The three liberations described in the sixth *bhūmi* of the *Daśabhūmiśvāro* are emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness. In this *bhūmi*, the Bodhisattvas use their wisdom to contemplate the cycle of birth and death of all creatures in these ten aspects, forward and backward in time, that is; (1) in terms of the interconnections of the elements of becoming (*bhavāṅgānusaṃdhitas*); (2) in terms of being all in one mind (*ekacittasamavasaraṇatas*); (3) in terms of differentiation of one's own action (*svakarmasaṃbhedatas*),[1] and so on. After contemplating the *pratītyasamutpāda* with these ten aspects, then the Bodhisattvas expound on emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness as follows:

> tasyaivaṃ daśākāraṃ pratītyasamutpādaṃ pratyavekṣamānasya/ nirātmato niḥsat-tvato nirjīvato niḥpudgalataḥ svabhāva-śūnyataḥ kāraka-vedaka-rahitataś ca/ pra-tyavekṣamānasya śūnyatā-vimokṣa-mukham ājātaṃ bhavati/ (Dbh p.102 *ll*.3- 6)

[1] Cleary, Thomas (1993), *The Flower Ornament Scripture: The Translation of Avataṃsaka Sutra*, p. 748

While Bodhisattvas thus contemplate the *pratītyasamutpāda* in these ten aspects, because of contemplating it in terms of being without self, without being, without soul, without person, inherently empty, without doer or subject, the door of emptiness liberation becomes manifest to them.

tasyaiṣāṃ bhavāṅgānāṃ svabhāva-nirodhātyantavimokṣapratyupasthānato/ na kiṃcid dharmanimittam utpadyate/ ato'syānimitta-vimokṣa-mukham ājātaṃ bhavati/ (DBh p.102 *ll*.6-7)

Because of the nullity of own-being of these elements of becoming, being in the presence of ultimate liberation, no sign of any elements occurs to them. Hence, this door of signlessness becomes manifest to them.

tasyaivaṃ śūnyatānimittam na kaścid abhilāṣa utpadyate/ anyatra mahākaruṇāpūr-vaṃgamāt/ sattvaparipākād evam asyāpraṇihita-vimokṣa-mukham ājātaṃ bhavati/(DBh p.102 *ll*. 7-9)

In those who have thus entered into emptiness and signlessness, no desire whatsoever arises, except, led by great compassion, for the full development of sentient beings: thus this door of liberation of wishlessness becomes manifest to them.

In this way, the Bodhisattvas contemplate the fact that all creatures in *saṃsāra* dependently originate. In the *pratītyasamutpāda*, there are no ideas of self and other, of agent and perceiver, of being and nonbeing. As the liberation of emptiness arises, the contaminated being of the Bodhisattva turns into the purified being of the Bodhisattva, or *śūnyatā*.

We can explain the relationship between the *pratītyasamutpāda*, signlessness and wishlessness in this way. After the Bodhisattvas have contemplated the *pratītya- samutpāda*, the door of emptiness liberation becomes manifest to them. After realizing that the *pratītyasamutpāda* is not a real entity, they gain absolute liberation through the origination of solitude. They continue to contemplate the *pratītyasa- mutpāda* until the door of signlessness liberation becomes manifest to them. The condition of being without self, without being, without soul, without person arises after the realization of emptiness, and no sign of any thing occurs to them after the signlessness. But still they have great compassion for all creatures. The wish to help all creatures is still in their minds and the door of wishlessness liberation becomes manifest to them. The Bodhisattvas contemplate the fact that all creatures are still in *saṃsāra* due to the *pratītyasamutpāda*. The Bodhisattvas understand the relationship between the *pratītyasamutpāda* and the three doors of liberation as follows:

sa imāni trīṇi vimokṣamukhāni bhāvayann ātmaparasaṃjñāpagataḥ kāraka-vedaka-saṃjñāpagato bhāvābhāvasaṃjñāpagato/ bhūyasyā mātrayā mahākaruṇā-puraskṛtaḥ prayujyate/ apariniṣpannānāṃ bodhyaṅgānāṃ pariniṣpattaye/ (DBh p.102 *ll*.9-11)

Causing these three doors of liberations to become manifest, they leave behind the ideas of self and other, of agent and perceiver, of being and nonbeing. All the more, filled with compassion, they work to perfectly attain the elements of enlightenment which they have not yet attained.

In this way the Bodhisattvas contemplate the *pratītyasamutpāda* while prac- tising these three doors of liberations. Then they leave behind the ideas of self and other, of agent and perceiver, of being and nonbeing. At this moment the Bodhisattvas turn themselves from contaminated beings into *śūnyatā*.

II From *śūnyatā* to *pratītyasamutpāda* in the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda, Daśaśubhādiṣvāranam* of *Yogācāra*

In the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda*, the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā*, which is the fundamental truth, (1) is in the all-encompassing beings, (2) is the foremost, (3) is the yet foremost aim, which flows from that, etc. The *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda* has explained the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* on the *Daśabhūmi* (ten stages) like this. The ten *bhūmi* (stages) are the locations or stages along the path that the Bodhisattvas are able to use to pursue the perfections in order to ascend to the next location above. Moreover, they are places of morality, where the ten truths can be practiced.

bhūmiṣu punar yathā-kramaṃ/
sarvvatragārthe[2] agrārthe[3]
niṣyandāgrārtha eva ca/
niṣparigrahatā[4]rthe ca
santānābheda eva ca// II 14
niḥsaṃkleśa-viśuddhy-arthe
'nānā[5]tvārtha eva ca/
ahīnānadhikārthe ca
caturddhā-vaśitāśraye// II 15
dharmma[6]-dhātāv avidyeyaṃ
akliṣṭā daśadhāvṛtiḥ[7]/
daśabhūmi-vipakṣeṇa
pratipakṣās tu
bhūmayaḥ// II.16[8]
(MAnVBh p.34 *l*.20-p.35 *l*.5)

sa rnams la yang (C-rims) go rim bzhin te//
kun tu 'gro don mchog gi don//
rgyu mthun don gyi mchog nyid dang//
yongs (C9a-7) su (N11a-6)'dzin pa med (D9a-7) don dang//
rgyud rnams tha dad med (P11a-8) don dang// (14)
nyon mongs rnam dag min don dang//
tha dad med pa'i don nyid dang//
bri (NP-dri) med 'phel ba med don dang//
dbang ni rnam pa bzhi yi gnas// (15)
chos kyi dbyings la ma rig pa//
(P11b-1) nyon mongs can min (N11a-7) sgrib pa bcu//
sa bcu'i (C9b-1) (D9b-1) mi mthun phyogs rnam kyi//
gnyen po dag ni sa yin no//[9] (16)

And to the stages, [there may be obstructions,] in this order:
"In regard to the all-encompassing aim,
to the foremost aim,
to the yet foremost aim which flows from that,
to the aim of non-seizing.
to an absence of distinction in the series,
to the aim neither affliction nor purity,
to the aim of an absence of variety,
to the aim that there is neither "inferior" nor "superior",
and to the four-fold basis of power,
there is this ignorance in the Element of Existence (*dharmadhātu*),
a ten-fold non-afflicted covering,
by way of factors adverse to the Ten Stages,
but the antidotes to them are the Stages!" II. 14-16.

---

2 without saṃdhi, metri causa.
3 Pāda in vipula III
4 Ms °grahātā
5 Avagraha unmetrical; read anānā°
6 Ms dharmmā
7 Ms °āvṛttiḥ
8 Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya Chap.2 varaṇam c) bhūmiṣv āvaraṇam (kārikās 14-16) By Vasubandhu
9 dBus daṅ mtha' rnam par 'byed pa'i 'grel pa Chap.2 sgrib pa'i le'ur bcad pa (kārikās 14-16) By Vasubandhu (C9a2-9b2) (D9a6-9b2) (N11a5-11b1) (P11a7-11b2)

However, in the sixth stage of the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda* it is explained that the difference between the contaminated and purified beings has disappeared. Here, I will refer to the commentary of Vasubandhu:

> ṣaṣṭhyā niḥsaṃkleṣa-viśuddhy-arthaṃ pratītyasamutpāde (/) nāsti sa kaścid dharmmo yaḥ saṃkliśyate vā viśudhyate veti prativedhāt/ (MAnVBh p.35 *ll*.19-21)
>
> With the sixth stage, it comprehends the aim where there is neither affliction nor purity, because of its realization that there is no event which is being afflicted or purified [by defilement, karma, etc] in the *pratītyasamutpāda*.

In the verse of Maitreya in the commentary of Vasubandhu it is explained, "It was not contaminated and also purified by the defilement and karma etc." The reason for this, as Sthiramati comments, is:[10][11]

> ṣaṣṭhyā niḥsaṃkleśaviśuddhyarthaṃ dharmadhātoḥ pratividhyatīti saṃbadhyate/ pratītyasamutpādalakṣaṇaḥ *saṃkleśas tasminn āgantujāt prakṛtyā na saṃkliṣṭaḥ/*
> *prākṛtikaviśuddher na*[10] *vi*śudhyati/
> (MAnVT p.104 *ll*. 3-6)

> drug pa la (NP om. la) ni kun nas nyon mongs pa dang/ (D239b-7)rnam par dag (CD byang) pa ma yin pa'i don du(P79b-6)ste/ chos kyi dbyings rab tu rtogs zhes bya bar sbyar ro/ rten cing(N72-a7)'brel bar 'bying ba'i mtshan nyid kun(C239a-7)nas nyon mongs pa ni (NP om. ni) de la glo bur du 'byung ba'i phyir rang bzhin gyis kun nas nyon mongs pa ma yin no/(P79a-7)rang bzhin gyis rnam par dag pas rnam par dag (C dgyu) par(D240a-1)'gyur ba ma yin no//[11]
> (C239a6-239b1) (D239b6-240a2) (N72a7-72b1) (P79b5-79b7)

> The connection of this passage is as follows: "With the sixth stage, the *dharmadhātu* realizes that it comprehends the aim where there is neither affliction nor purity." The affliction in being with the characteristic of the *pratītyasamutpāda* arises accidentally, not from the natural state; it does not mean that it was purifying its natural state, because its natural state is pure.

In section I, the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ,* the Bodhisattvas contemplate the *pratītyasamutpāda*, and expound these three doors of liberations. They leave behind the ideas of self and other, of agent and perceiver, of being and nonbeing. At this moment the Bodhisattvas turn from contaminated beings into *śūnyatā*. But in section II the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda* explains that the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* in its natural state is not contaminated and also is not purified. As Vasubandhu and Sthiramati explain: a) the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* is brilliant and luminous in its natural state, because it is the nature of all creatures, b) when the Bodhisattvas enlighten the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā*, the affliction arises accidentally; it is purified by the eradication of affliction. Therefore, the eradication of affliction equals to the purification of beings. It does not mean that the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* was contaminated in its natural state;

[10] The italics are the reconstruction of the missing portions of the Sanskrit texts.
[11] The underlined parts are the meaning of the missing portions of the Sanskrit texts.

rather c) the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* is pure in its natural state, and is beyond all encompassing defilement. It is at this point in time that the mechanism of the Great Compassion starts to work. Because defilement has been annihilated, the being is purified. However, this does not mean that the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* is purified. In this way, when the Bodhisattvas practice on the Bodhisattva-path, they change from contaminated beings into purified beings. And conversely, when the Great Compassion works, they change from purified beings into contaminated being. We can understand from this that the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas are non-self, and also that all sentient beings are non-self. They are all one in the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* and all work together. It is not meant that the natural state was contaminated and purified.

III The relationship between *pratītyasamutpāda* and *śūnyatā* in the *Mādhyān- tavibhāga* Chapter 1 *Abhūta-parikalpa* Stanza 1 *Sad-asal-lakṣaṇa*

Let's contemplate the contaminated and purified being in this third section. The *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 1 Stanza 11 states that:

> Tredhā dvedhā ca saṃkleśaḥ saptadhā 'bhūta-parikalpanāt // I.11 (MAnVBh p.21 *l.* 21)
>
> Together, the threefold, twofold, and sevenfold afflictions (the twelvefold afflictions of the *pratītyasamutpāda*) originate from the Unreal Ideation (*abhūta-parikalpa*).

From this stanza we can infer that the Unreal Ideation and the *pratītyasa- mutpāda* are the same. The *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 1 *Abhūta-parikalpa* Stanza 1 *Sad-asal-lakṣaṇa* explains this as follows:

> tatra lakṣaṇam ārabhyāha/ abhūta-parikalpo'sti dvayan tatra na vidyate/ śūnyatā vidyate tv atra tasyām api sa vidyate// I1 tatrābhūtaparikalpo grāhya-grāhaka-vikalpaḥ/ dvayaṃ grāhyaṃ grāhakañ ca/ śūn- yatā tasyābhūtaparikalpasya grāhya-grāhaka-bhāvena virahitatā/ tasyām api sa vidyata ity abhūtaparikalpaḥ/ evaṃ yad yatra nāsti tat tena śūnyam iti yathābhūtaṃ samanupaśyati yat punar atrāvaśiṣṭaṃ bhavati tat sad ihāstīti yathābhūtaṃ prajānātītyaviparitaṃ śūnyatā-lakṣaṇan udbhāvitam bhavati/ (MAnVBh p.17 *l.*15-p.18 *l.*7)
>
> There, beginning with the characteristics, the author says: ("he") "There is Unreal Ideation; duality is not found there; ("she") But emptiness is found here; and "he" is found in "her", as well." I.1. There (in this passage), "Unreal Ideation" is the distinction of object grasped and subject grasper. The two are object grasped and subject grasper. "Emptiness" is the separation of Unreal Ideation from the being of object grasped and subject grasper. "And 'he' is found in 'her', as well": i.e. Unreal Ideation (is found in Emptiness, as well). And if it (duality) is not there in that way, then, as a result, one sees "as it is", namely, that it is empty. Furthermore, one completely observes that that which remains (after duality vanishes) is what is (really) existent here, and the emptiness characteristic is made to arise in an unreversed manner.

And also we can see from the *Ṭīkā* of Sthiramati:

atha vā lakṣaṇaṃ saṃ*kleśavyavadānābhidhānād anyan nāstīty ataḥ saṃkleśavyavadānalakṣaṇaparīkṣārtham āha/*	yang (P26a1) na kun nas nyon mongs pa dang rnam par byang ba dag gi mtshan nyid brjod pa las gzhan med pas de'i phyir kun nas nyon mongs pa dang/ rnam par byang ba'i mtshan nyid brtag (P rtag DC bstan) pa'i don du/ (P om. /)
abhūtapari kalpo'sti	yang dag ma yin kun rtog (P26a4) yod// (P om. //)
iti vistaraḥ/ abhūtaparikalpasvabhāvaḥ saṃkleśo bhrāntilakṣaṇatvāt / katham etaj jñātavyaṃ bhrāntilakṣaṇam iti yena	ces rgya cher (D195a3) gsungs so// 'khrul (C195a3) pa'i mtshan nyid phyir (DC phyi/) yang dag pa ma yin pa kun rtog pa'i rang bzhin ni kun nas nyon mongs pa'o// 'di 'khrul pa'i mtshan nyid (DC nyid du) ji ltar shes par bya zhe na/ 'di (P26a5) ltar
dvayaṃ tatra na vidyate/	de la gnyis po yod ma yin// (P om. //)
svātmany avidyamānena grāhya-grāhakākāreṇa prakhyān*ād bhrāntisvarūpeṇa jñāyate/ idānīṃ vyavadānasvarūpaparīkṣārtham āha/*	bdag nyid du med par gzung (P bzung) ba dang 'dzin pa'i rnam (D195a4) par snang bas 'khrul ba'i ngo bo nyid (C195a4) du mngon no// da ni rnam par byang ba'i rang gi ngo bo brtag pa'i phyir/
śūnyatā vidyate tv atra	stong pa nyid ni (P26a6)'di la yod// (P om. //)
*iti/ śūnyatāsvabhāvo hi vyavadānaṃ dvay*ābhāvasvabhāvatvāt/ atra ca śūnyatāprabhāvitatvād mārganirodhayor api grahaṇaṃ veditavyam / saṃkleśapakṣād eva vyavadānapakṣo mārgayitavyo na punaḥ pṛthaktvam asyāstīti pradarśanā*rtham āha atreti/ yadi dvayaṃ nāsti kathaṃ tasyāṃ vidyamānāyāṃ*[12] *loko bhrānta iti pṛṣṭam/ ataś cāha/*	ces bya ba gsungs so// gnyis po med pa'i rang bzhin yin pa'i phyir/ (PC //) stong pa nyid kyi rang bzhin ni rnam par byang ba'o// stong pa nyid kyis rab tu phye bas lam (D195a5) dang 'gag pa dag kyang 'dir (P26a7) bsdu (C195a5) bar rig par bya'o// kun nas nyon mongs pa'i phyogs nyid las rnam par byang ba'i phyogs (DC phyogs nyid) bstal bar bya'i (DC bya ba'i) rang gi rgyud gud na med par rab tu bstan pa'i phyir 'di la zhes bya ba gsungs so// gal te (P26a8) gnyis po med na ci'i phyir de yod par 'jig rten (D195a6) 'khrul par gyur zhes (P ces) dris(C195a6)pa dang/ de'i phyir
tasyām api sa vidyate// iti/[13]	de la yang ni de yod do zhes bya ba gsungs te/[14]
(MAnVT p.12 *l*. 26-p.13 *l*.16)	(C195a2-195a6) (D195a2-195a6) (P26a1-26a8)

[12] Yamaguchi's note is sā vidyamānā.

[13] The italics are the reconstruction of the missing portions of the Sanskrit texts.

[14] The underlined parts are the meaning of the missing portions of the Sanskrit texts.

Or rather, the *lakṣaṇa,* the characteristic is no other than the expression (of characteristic of) defilement and purification. Therefore in order to examine this characteristic of defilement and purification, he says:

“Unreal Ideation exists” etc.

The essence of Unreal Ideation is defilement because its characteristic nature is false. How should this to be understood? Since [Unreal Ideation] is a false characteristic.

“Duality does not [absolutely] exist in it.”

And because it is the being perceived by the form of subject grasper and object grasped which does not exist in itself, its illusive own form is evident. Now, in order to examine the aim of its own form of purification (vyavadāna) he says:

“Emptiness however exists in it.”

For the essence nature of Emptiness is purification because it is the essence nature of the unreality of duality. -- (Omitted) -- now the following question may arise: If the duality (subject grasper and object grasped) does not exist, then even though she (the Emptiness) exists, why is here the illusion of the world? Therefore states:

“In this (Emptiness) too, that (Unreal Ideation) is found.”

The *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 1 *Abhūta-parikalpa* Stanza 1 *Sad-asal-lak- ṣaṇa* explains the contaminated being. The contaminated being has the Unreal Ideation as its essence nature. Because its characteristic nature is false, the discrimination of object grasped and subject grasper has occurred. However, when the Bodhisattvas became enlightened, and there was no object grasped, then we also know that the subject grasper does not exist either. At this moment the Bodhisattvas turn themselves into the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* or *tathatā*. Therefore, in Stanza 1, the concept of the Unreal Ideation is explained: that there are no object grasped and subject grasper. When the Bodhisattvas realize that there is duality in the Unreal Ideation, then the enlightenment of the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* or *tathatā* occurs. At this moment, the Bodhisattvas turn themselves from contaminated beings into the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā*, but, at the same time in Stanza 1, purified the *dharmadhātu* has emptiness as its essential nature. Next, the Bodhisattvas work to help all creatures to achieve purified the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* through their great compassion. We can recall at this time that the contaminated being (Unreal Ideation) and the purified being (*dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā*) are the same and conclude that in *śūnyatā* there is the Unreal Ideation, and in the Unreal Ideation there is *śūnyatā*.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued, based on the analysis of the thought of the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ* in the *Avatamsakasūtra* and the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda, Daśaśubhādiṣvāraṇam* of *Yoga- cāra*, that Unreal Ideation and *pratītyasamutpāda* are the same. I have also argued that the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ* has explained that in the *pratītyasamutpāda*, the nature of oneself, life, creatures, human beings, behavior, and experience do not exist. In the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* it is stated that the

nature of these things can be understood as the object grasped and subject grasper. In short, if we compare the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ* to the *Mādhyāntavibhāga*, Chapter 1 *Abhūtaparikalpa,* Stanza 1, *Sad-asal-lakṣaṇa*, when the nature of oneself, life, creatures, human beings, behavior, and experience of subject grasper in the *pratītyasamutpāda* do not exist, the door of the liberation of emptiness opens. This means that *śūnyatā* is located in the Unreal Ideation. Furthermore, when the Bodhisattvas contemplate the *pratītyasamutpāda*, they realize these three doors of liberations. Then they are able to leave behind the ideas of self and other, of agent and perceiver, of being and nonbeing: in short, the Unreal Ideation is also located in *śūnyatā*.

According to the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtraṃ* and the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 1 *Abhūta-parikalpa* Stanza 1 *Sad-asal-lakṣaṇa*, when the Bodhisattvas practice on the Bodhisattva-path, they turn from contaminated beings into purified beings. Moreover, when the Great Compassion works, they turn from purified beings into contaminated beings. In the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda* it is explained that the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas are non-self and also all the sentient beings are non-self. They are all one in the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* and all work together. This does not mean that the *dharmadhātu* or *śūnyatā* turns into contaminated being, or becomes clean.

References

Primary Sources and Abbreviations

DBh = Daśabhūmiśvaro nāma mahāyānasūtraṃ by Ryūko Kondo, Tokyo, 1936.
Tib. Sang rgyas pha po che shes bya ba shin tu rgyas pa chen po'i mdo
31. sa bcu
Peking: li 101b7-109a1 sDe dge: kha 219a3-226a7

MAnVBh = Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya by GM. Nagao, Tokyo, 1964.
Tib. dBus dang mtha' rnam par 'byed pa'i 'grel pa
Peking: bi 11a7-12a4 Cone: bi 9a6-10a2
sDe dge: bi 9a6-10a2 sNar thang: bi 11a5-12a2

MAnVT = Madhyāntavibhāga-ṭīkā by Susumu Yamaguchi, Nagoya, 1934.
Tib. dBus dang mtha' rnam par 'byed pa'i 'grel bshad
Peking: tshi 76a1-81b5 Cone: bi 236a3-241a1
sDe dge: bi 236b3-241b2 sNar thang: tshi 68b7-74a3

Secondary Sources

Anacker, Stefan. Seven Works of Vasubandhu-The Buddhist Psychological Doctor. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998.

Chandra, Lokesh. Sanskrit-Tibetan Dictionary. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2007.

Cleary, Thomas. The flower Ornament Scripture- A Translation of The Avatamsaka Sutra. Boston & London: Shambala, 1993.

G.M, Nagao. Daijyou Butten 15- Seshin Ronshuu. Tokyo: Chuo kou ron sha, Showa 51 (1976).

G.M, Nagao. Index to theMahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra, Part I (SANSKRIT-TIBETAN-CHINESE). Tokyo: Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, 1958.

G.M, Nagao. Index to theMahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra, Part II (TIBETAN- SANSKRIT& CHINESE-SANSKRIT). Tokyo: Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, 1961.

G.M, Nagao. Mādhyamika and Yogācāra- A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1992.

Norutoshi, Aramaki. Daijyou Butten 8- Juu Chi Kyou. Tokyo: Chuo kou ron sha, Showa 49 (1974).

Pandeya, Ramchandra. Madhyānta-Vibhāga-śāstra. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999.

Stcherbatsky, Theodore. Madhyānta-vibhaga- Discourse on Discrimination between Middle and Extremes. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978.

Vaidya, P.L. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts No. 7 Daśabhūmikasūtra. Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1967.

Williams, Monier, Sir. A Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2002.

Pratityasamutpada in Eastern and Western Modes of Thought

Christian Thomas Kohl

Introduction:

There is a surprising parallel between Nagarjuna's philosophical view of reality and the physical view of reality of quantum physics. The fundamental reality has no firm core but consists of systems of interacting objects. This paper will show that these philosophical and physical views of reality are inconsistent with the substantial, subjective, holistic and instrumentalist views of reality which form the foundation of modern modes of thought.

Preliminary Note:

We should be cautious about hastily translating the Sanskrit term 'pratityasamutpada' before having understood the full spectrum of its meaning. Thus, rather than dealing with the abstract term pratityasamutpada, this paper will work with the images which Nagarjuna used to illustrate his concepts. The images are evidences of relations, intervals and intermediate states.[1]

1. Nagarjuna's View of Reality

Nagarjuna, who lived in the second century after Christ, was the most significant Buddhist philosopher of India. He was the founder of the philosophical school Madhyamaka or Middle Way which is of great topical interest because it determines the thinking of all traditions of Tibetan Buddhism right to this day. It indicates a spiritual and philosophical path that aspires to avoid extreme metaphysical views, particularly the views of substantial and subjective thinking in their various forms.

Apart from various unconfirmed legends, we have no assured biographical knowledge of Nagarjuna. The authenticity of thirteen of his works is regarded to be more or less established by academic research. In particular, the Danish scholar Christian Lindtner has examined and translated Nagarjuna's thirteen works extensively.[2] Nagarjuna's main work, *Mulamadhyamaka-karika* (MMK) has been translated into several European languages.[3]

---

[1] See Appendix 1 for the term pratityasamutpada in eastern and western modes of thought.

[2] Lindtner, Christian. *Nagarjuniana: Studies in the writings and philosophy of Nagarjuna*. India: Motilal Banarsidass. 2002. It is worth noting, however, that Tilmann Vetter has raised doubts about the authenticity of one of Nagarjuna's works in: "On the Authenticity of the Ratnavali." In: *Asiatische Studien XLVI*, 1992. pp. 492-506.

[3] For two well-known translations, see: Kalupahana, David J. *Mulamadhyamakakarika Nagarjuna: The philosophy of the middle way*. India: Motilal Banarsidass. 1999; Garfield, Jay L. *The fundamental wisdom of the middle way: Nagarjuna's 'Mulamadhyamakakarika' (MMK)*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996.

In his main work (MMK) the Middle Way is described as follows: "What arises dependently (pratityasamutpada) is pronounced to be substancelessness (sunyata). This is nothing but a dependent concept (prajnapti). Substancelessness (sunyata) constitutes the middle way." (chapter 24, verse 18).

Nagarjuna's philosophy consists principally of two aspects. The first aspect is an exposition of his view of reality (sunyata, pratityasamutpada), according to which fundamental reality has no firm core and does not consist of independent, substantial components but of two-body systems which reciprocally affect each other.[4] This view of reality is diametrically opposed to one of the key concepts of traditional Indian metaphysics: 'svabhava' or 'own being'.

The second aspect of Nagarjuna's philosophy is an answer to the inner contradictions of four extreme modes of thought which are not exhaustively presented by Nagarjuna but only indicated in principle. This is not only a debate within the traditional metaphysics of India because the principles can be related to *our* extreme modes of thought that make it impossible for us to recognize the nature of reality. I relate the four extreme propositions to the substantial, subjective, holistic and instrumentalist modes of thought found in the modern world. In order to effectively demonstrate that these modes of thought are unsustainable, at first we have to recognize them as such. Therefore, without intending to be complete, a brief outline of the four modes of thought will follow.

(1) Substantialism

Substance is something that has independent existence.[5] In Europe, substantialism is at the center of traditional metaphysics, beginning with pre-Socratic philosophers (like Parmenides and Heraclitus, two critics of substantial thought) via Plato right up to Immanuel Kant. According to traditional metaphysics, substance or own being is something that has independent existence, something unchangeable, eternal and existing by itself. Substance is the underlying basis for the entire non-material foundation of the world in which we live. Plato made a distinction between two forms of being: particularly in the second part of his *Parmenides* he distinguished between, on the one hand, singular objects which exist exclusively through participation without own being and, on the other hand, ideas that do have own being.

Traditional metaphysics adopted Plato's dualism. An independent own being is characterized in traditional metaphysics as something that, as an existing thing, is not dependent on anything else (Descartes); is existing by itself and subsisting through itself (More); is completely unlimited by others and free from any kind of foreign command (Spinoza); and exists of itself without anything else (Schelling). In traditional metaphysics, the highest substance was often understood as God or as a divine being. Since Kant's so called 'Copernican Revolution' the primary question of philosophy is no longer to know reality, but rather to know the mind or the source of perception and knowledge. For this reason the traditional metaphysics has lost ground in the modern world. In fact the central concepts of the traditional metaphysics, such as being, substance, reality, essence, etc. have been replaced by the reductionist modes of thought of modern sciences. Now atoms, elementary particles, energy, fields of force, laws of nature etc., are seen as the fundamental ground for everything else.

[4] I use the expression 'body' synonymously with 'quantum object' or 'particle' or 'field' or 'system' or 'entity'. There is just a small difference between these expressions that can be neglected.
[5] Webster's New World Dictionary, New York. 1968.

(2) Subjectivism

By subjectivist modes of thought I understand the turning of attention to the subject that resulted from the changes created by René Descartes. According to his doctrine, consciousness is primarily existent and everything else is sheer content or a form or a creation of the consciousness. The high point of this kind of subjectivism is represented by the idealism of Berkeley while the ideas of Kant can be considered as a moderated subjectivism or idealism. Hans-Georg Gadamer emphasizes that subjectivity or self-awareness has become the fulcrum of modern philosophical thought which provides for evidential proof and certainty. This view has been continually brought into doubt by the modern physical sciences. However, the doubts have not lead to a new and complementary view of reality but to a fatal separation of philosophy and the modern physical sciences. This process of separation has enforced the dualism that preoccupies modern thought. According to the physicist P.C.W. Davies, electrons, photons or atoms do not exist, they are nothing but models of thought.[6]

(3) Holism

The third approach tries to avoid the fatal either-or dichotomy of the first two approaches by merging subject and object into one entity, such that there are no longer any separate parts but only one identity: all is one. Holism is "the view that an organic or integrated whole has a reality independent of and greater than the sum of its parts."[7] The whole entity is made absolute, is mystified and becomes an independent unity that exists without dependence on its parts. Wholeness is understood as something concrete as if it was a matter of fact or an object of experience. As a philosophical approach found in great periods of European history of philosophy, this view is connected with names like Thomas Aquinas, Leibniz, Schelling. In quantum physics, holism is represented by David Bohm.[8]

(4) Instrumentalism

Instead of favoring subject or object or the two together, the fourth metaphysical approach refutes or ignores the existence of both. According to this viewpoint, the search for reality is insignificant or meaningless. Instrumentalism is very modern, intelligent (for example in the person of Ernst Cassirer), and sometimes somewhat captious. It is difficult to disengage from it. As an extension of subjectivism, it regards the process of thinking as thinking in models and as working with information, without concern as to what phenomena the information is about. The philosopher Donald Davidson said about this problem of instrumentalism which is a legacy of subjectivism, "Once one makes the decision for the Cartesian approach, it seems that one is unable to indicate what one's proofs are evidence for."[9] "Instrumentalism is a collective term that denotes a variety of scientific approaches. They all have the common feature that they do not at all or not primarily consider the totality of human knowledge or scientific constructs, statements and theories as realistic

[6] Davies, P.C.W. *The Ghost in the Atom*. Cambridge. 1986.

[7] Webster's Dictionary, New York 1968.

[8] Bohm's key word is 'holomovement', an 'undivided wholeness in flowing movement' (Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the implicate Order*. London: Routledge Classics. 2000).

[9] Davidson, Donald. "The myth of the subjective". In: Davidson, Donald. *Subjective, intersubjective, objective*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1988.

reproductions of the structure of reality. Rather instrumentalism considers human knowledge to be the result of interactions of humans with nature, for the purpose of establishing theoretically and practically successful models. For instrumentalism, theories are not a description of the world but an instrument for a systematic classification and explanation of observations, and for the predictions of facts."[10]

The instrumentalist approach is outlined by the experimental physicist Anton Zeilinger who stated in an interview, "In classical physics we speak of a world of things that exists somewhere outside and we describe their nature. In quantum physics we have learned that we have to be very careful about this. Ultimately physical sciences are not sciences of nature but sciences of statements about nature. Nature in itself is always a construction of mind. Niels Bohr once put it like this: 'There is no world of quantum, there is only a quantum mechanical description.'"[11]

Nagarjuna presents these four extreme views of reality in a scheme that is called in Sanskrit: 'catuskoti' and in Greek: 'tetralemma'. In a short form, they can be expressed as follows: *Things do not arise substantially: 1. either out of themselves, 2. nor out of something else, 3. nor out of both, 4. nor without a cause.* Behind this scheme there are, as mentioned before, four views of reality that can be related to substantial, subjective, holistic, and instrumentalist modes of thought in the modern world. It would be difficult to find a modern person who does not, in his own way, hold one of these four extreme views. This shows that Nagarjuna's philosophy is very up-to-date. Nagarjuna did not refute 1. the substantial modes of thought in order to end up in 2. subjectivism, even though this is often claimed against him; nor did he refute the 'either or' mode of thought in order to end with a view of 3. holism, identity, or wholeness, which some benevolent interpreters say of him; nor did he refute holism in order to end up with 4. instrumentalism, as is believed by many modern interpreters in imitation of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Nagarjuna does not fall into any of these extremes because they are the exact four extreme metaphysical views that he systematically refutes.

Already in the very first verse of the MMK, he points out not only the dilemma but the whole tetralemma of our thinking. That verse states: "Neither from itself nor from another, nor from both, nor without a cause, does anything whatever anywhere arise."[12] This verse can be understood as the principal statement of the *Mulamadhyamaka-karika* (MMK): The refutation of the four extreme metaphysical views, that cannot be reconciled with the dependent arising of things. If this is the case, the remainder of the MMK would be merely a clarification of this first verse. Therefore this requires careful examination. What is the assertion made by this verse? That nothing can be found, that there is nothing, that nothing exists? Was Nagarjuna denying the external world? Did he wish to refute that which evidently is? Did he want to call into question the world in which we live?

[10] Kuno Lorenz, Enzykopädie Philosophie und Wissenschaftstheorie. 4 Bände. Jürgen Mittelstraß (H.G). Stuttgart Weimar 1980 ff. -My own translation

[11] Zeilinger, Anton. Interview in the German newspaper Tagesspiegel 20 December 1999 (my own translation). Steven Hawkings is defending a very similar position. He says: "I, on the other hand, am a positivist who believes that physical theories are just mathematical models we construct, and that it is meaningless to ask if they correspond to reality, just whether they predict observations" ("The Objections of an Unashamed Reductionist." In: Penrose, Roger. *The Large, the Small and the Human Mind*, Cambridge University Press. 2000. p. 169). It is not meaningless to ask about the correspondence between a model and object, because if a model is correct then it has structural similarities with the phenomena that it is reconstructing; otherwise it can lead to predictions for which there are no meaningful physical explanation, because they have no correspondence to experimental data.

[12] Garfield, Jay L. *The fundamental wisdom of the middle way: Nagarjuna's 'Mulamadhyamakakarika' (MMK)*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996. p. 3.

Did he wish to deny the presence everywhere of things that somehow arise? If by 'arise' we understand the notion of the empirical arising of things then we are obliged to argue that if a thing does not arise out of itself, it must arise out of something else. So we should ask: what is the significance of the notion 'to arise'?

In another text, Nagarjuna himself gives some indication of how to understand this view. He writes in his work Yuktisastika (YS):

> 19. That which has arisen dependently on this and that *that* has not arisen substantially (svabhavatah). What has not arisen substantially, how can it literally (nama) be called 'arisen'? …That which originates due to a cause and does not abide without (certain) conditions but disappears when the conditions are absent, how can it be understood as 'to exist'?[13]

By the notions of 'arising' and 'exist', Nagarjuna does not mean the empirical but the substantial arising or existence. When in many other passages of Mulamadhyamaka-karika Nagarjuna states that things do not arise (MMK 7.29), that they do not exist (MMK 3.7, MMK 5.8, MMK 14.6), that they are not to be found (8MMK 2.25, MMK 9.11), that they are not (MMK 15.10), that they are unreal (MMK13.1), then clearly this has the meaning: things do not arise substantially, they do not exist out of themselves, their independence cannot be found, they are dependent and in this sense they are substantially unreal. Nagarjuna only refutes the idea of a substantial arising of things, of an absolute and independent existence. He does not refute the empirical existence of things. This is what he is explaining when he states: "'It exists' implies grasping after eternity. 'It does not exist' implies the philosophy of annihilation. Therefore, a discerning person should not decide on either existence or non-existence" (MMK 15.10). For Nagarjuna, the expression 'to exist' has the meaning 'to exist substantially'. His issue is not the empirical existence of things (dharma) but the idea of a permanent thing and of things having a substance. Only the idea of an own being, without dependence to something else, is refuted by Nagarjuna. Things do not arise out of themselves, they do not exist absolutely, their permanent being is not to be found, they are not independent but they are dependent.

The many interpretations of Nagarjuna that claim that he is also refuting the empirical existence of objects, are making an inadmissible generalization that moves Nagarjuna near to subjectivism, nihilism or instrumentalism. Such interpretations originate in metaphysical approaches that themselves have a difficulty in recognizing the empirical existence of the presenting data, which is not at all the case with Nagarjuna.

How does Nagarjuna present the dependence of phenomena? He presents his ideas mainly in images.[14] Before I will give my own interpretation of the 25 chapters of Nagarjuna's main work, *Mulamadhyamaka-karika*, The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way (MMK), I would like to proceed to a rapid review of the 25 chapters.

---

[13] See: Lindtner, Christian. op.cit., pp. 109, 113.

[14] Images, metaphors, allegories or symbolic examples have a freshness which ideas can never claim. The starting point of the MMK is the double nature of phenomena. These fundamental two-body systems cannot be further analytically divided. The two bodies (sometimes three bodies) constitute a system of two or three material or immaterial components that complement each other. One of the components cannot exist without the other; each one forms the counterpart of the other.

Rapid Review of the 25 Chapters of MMK

1. A thing and its cause; 2. A mover and the space to be moved; 3. A seer and a vision or view; 4. A cause and an effect; 5. A characteristic and a characterized; 6. Affection and the person affected; 7. Origination, duration and decay; 8. Action and agent; 9. A seer and a vision; 10. Fire and fuel; 11. Birth and death; 12. Suffering and the causes of suffering; 13. A teenager and an aged person; 14. Something and a different thing; 15. Being and nothing; 16. Bondage and liberation; 17. Action and its fruit; 18. Identity and difference; 19. The past , the present and the future; 20. Cause and effect; 21. Coming to be and passing away; 22. The Buddha exists and the Buddha does not exist after death; 23. Pure and impure; 24. Buddha and bodhi; 25. Nirvana and being.

Interpretation of the 25 Chapters of MMK

In the first 25 chapters of MMK, Nagarjuna emphasizes one central idea: bodies are neither together nor separated. The most important characteristic of phenomena is their interdependence and the resultant, substancelessness, the impossibility of existing individually or independently. This is the meaning of pratityasamutpada and sunyata: phenomena are without own being and without independence. Reality does not consist of single, isolated material or immaterial components; phenomena arise only in dependence on other phenomena. Phenomena are in an intermediate state. Not the behavior of things but the behavior of something between them is essential.

Let us now try to understand these 25 chapters: a thing is not independent of its conditions, nor is it identical with them. A mover does not exist without the space to be moved. The mover and the space to be moved are not one. A seer is not the same as the view, but a seer without a view does not exist. There can be no cause without an effect, or an effect without a cause. The notion 'cause' has no meaning without the notion 'effect'. Cause and effect are not one, but they cannot be separated into two independent notions either. Without a characteristic we cannot speak of a characterized, or the other way round. How could there be an affected person without affection? When there is no action there is no actor, neither exists *per se*. Without fire there can be nothing designated as fuel. The material or immaterial components of a two-body system or a three-body system do not exist in isolation, they are not one and yet they are not independent of each other. Something is happening between these bodies and because of this they are not substantially real. For two or three complementary phenomena or for double concepts the nature and the existence of each is dependent on the other. The one arises with the other and disappears with the other. This is why a thing arises substantially, neither out of itself, nor out of another one, nor out of both, nor without a cause. There is no fundamental core to reality; rather reality consists of systems of interacting bodies.

This view of reality is first and foremost an idea; a pointer to the reality which cannot be described in words. One who can speak about concept-free reality has not experienced it. For the Buddhist tradition based on Nagarjuna, the yogic experience of substancelessness, the ascertainment of dependent arising, the direct perception of reality as it is, all presuppose a high level of a spiritual realization which entails the abandonment of extreme views and the dissolution of the whole edifice of dualistic thought. To experience pratityasamutpada or sunyata or dependence means to become free of all entanglements to this world. Nirvana is simply another expression for this.

2. Discussion of Nagarjuna's Work

For Nagarjuna, the primary question was not about mind, nor about the origin of knowledge but about reality. Such subjective interest applies more readily to the Yogacara School. But the interpretations of the most important works of Yogacara are controversial because they can be understood in an ontological sense that is denying the external world and is adopting the view of idealism or in an epistemic sense for the study of the nature of knowledge where perception is a projection of mind. What in Yogacara is termed 'alayavijnana' or the 'fundamental mind', or in tantric Buddhism 'Mahamudra' or 'clear light', refers to the experience and perception of sunyata. Nagarjuna's philosophy is referring to sunyata itself. In 2003, Tarab Tulku Rinpoche presented an all-encompassing position. He says "that everything existing partakes in a fundamental 'mind-field', which is the basic 'substance' from which basic-mind in a more individual way and the individual body develop"[15].

In order to emphasize that Nagarjuna does not only speak about views without substance but also about objects without substance, I will compare his view of reality to the views of reality suggested by several quantum physicists. Physics is not only about views but also about the conditions of physical reality. Undoubtedly, physics only creates models and thus examines only realities that had been posited by physics itself. Nevertheless, we should not go so far as to consider all our perceptions and thought models to be purely adventitious. While the constructions of our mind are not directly identical with reality, they are not purely coincidental and normally they are not deceptive either.[16] Behind these models are empirical objects and there is some approximation of a structural similarity between a good physical model and the corresponding physical reality.

3. The Metaphysical Foundations of Quantum Physics

> *A courageous scientific imagination was needed to realize fully that not the behavior of bodies, but the behavior of something between them, that is, the field, may be essential for ordering and understanding events. What impresses our senses as matter is really a great concentration of energy into a comparatively small space.* (Albert Einstein)[17]

This is not a presentation or criticism of quantum physics but a discussion of the metaphysical mindsets and principles that underlie quantum physics. The views of reality in quantum physics can be expressed by the three key words: complementarity, four interactions and entanglements.[18]

In the long prehistory of quantum physics it could not be proved experimentally whether the smallest elements of light were particles or waves. Many experiments argued in favor of one or the other assumption. Electrons and photons sometimes act like waves and sometimes like particles. This 'behavior' was named a wave-particle-dualism. The idea of dualism was therein understood as a logical contradiction, in that only one or the other could actually apply; but paradoxically both

[15] Tarab Tulku Rinpoche. UD-Newsletter N. 4, January 2006. Rabten, Geshe. *Mahamudra. Der Weg zur Erkenntnis der Wirklichkeit*. Switzerland: Le Mont Pélèrin. 2002. Keown, Damien. *A Dictionary of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003.

[16] See: Rock, Irvin. *Perception*. New York: H.W. Freeman & Company. 1995.

[17] Einstein. Albert, Infeld, Leopold. *The Evolution of Physics*. London: Cambridge University Press. 1938. pp. 257. 311-312.

[18] Appendix 2 of this paper will explain the term entanglement.

appeared. According to this understanding electrons and photons cannot be both particles and waves. This is the understanding according to atomism. According to atomism a scientific explanation consists of a reduction of a variable object into its permanent components or mathematical laws that apply to it. This is the fundamental dualistic view that modern atomism has adopted from the natural philosophy of the ancient Greeks: according to this, substance and permanence cannot to be found in objects of perception of the world in which we live, but can be found in the fundamental elements making up objects and the mathematical order applying to them. These material and immaterial foundations hold the world together, they do not change, although everything else changes.

According to the expectation of atomism, it should be possible to reduce an object to its *independent* elements, or to its mathematical laws, or to its simple and fundamental principles and according to these, the fundamental elements must be either particles or waves, not both.

What is to be understood by *independent* elements? As mentioned before in the first chapter: (1), the philosophical notion of substance indicates something that has independent existence.

Albert Einstein's Contribution to the Interpretation of Quantum Physics

Albert Einstein was following the aforementioned metaphysical tradition when he wrote:

> For the classification of things that are introduced in physics, it is essential that these things have for a certain time an independent existence, in so far as these things lie 'in different parts of space'. Without the assumption of such an independent existence [So-sein, suchness] of things which, in terms of ordinary thought, are spatially distant from each other, physical thought in the usual sense would not be possible.[19]

This idea of an independent reality was projected on to the basic element of the world of matter by atomism. For atomism, a scientific explanation means to reduce the variability and variety of objects and conditions to their permanent, stable, independent, and indivisible elements or to their conformity with mathematical laws. According to the expectations of atomism, all variations in nature can be explained in terms of separation, association and movements of unchanging, independent atoms or still more elementary particles. These particles and their conformity to mathematical laws constitute the core of things, they underlie everything and hold the world together. The question whether the fundamental objects are waves or particles was an explosive issue: at stake were the traditional metaphysical views of reality available to quantum physics. It became evident that the fundamental reality could not be grasped by traditional views of reality. What is the explanatory value of atomism if it becomes clear that there are no independent, stable atoms or elementary particles and that objects have no stable core? Were these quantum objects objective, subjective, both or neither? What is reality? Is the quantum world completely distinct from the world in which we are living?

[19] Einstein, Albert. *Quantenmechanik und Wirklichkeit, 'Dialectica 2'*. 1948 (my own translation). pp. 320-324.

Niels Bohr’s Contribution to the Interpretation of Quantum Physics

In 1927, the physicist Niels Bohr introduced the idea of complementarity into quantum physics. According to this idea, the wave form and the particle form are not two separate forms that contradict and exclude each other but are mutually complementary forms that only together can provide a complete description of physical manifestations. According to Niels Bohr, complementarity meant that in the quantum world it is impossible to speak about independent quantum objects because they are in an interactive relationship with each other as well as with the instrument of measurement. Niels Bohr emphasized that this interaction between the quantum object and the instrument of measurement was an inseparable element of quantum objects, because it plays a major part in the development of several features of quantum objects. Certain measurements establish electrons or photons as particles and destroy the interference that distinguishes the object as a wave. Other measurements establish the object as a wave. This was Niels Bohr’s new idea of reality. From the insight that the quantum object and the instrument of measurement could not be separated, Niels Bohr did not conclude that there are no quantum objects. At least he did not do so when he was arguing in terms of physics. When he spoke about the metaphysics of quantum physics, he sometimes took an instrumentalist approach.[20] For Niels Bohr, the fundamental physical reality consists of interacting and complementary quantum objects.

The Concepts of Interactions in the Standard Model of Quantum Physics

In the meantime, the notion of the four interactions was introduced into the standard model of quantum physics. These four elementary interactions or four forces obstruct the reduction of quantum objects into independent objects—as Democritus had suggested. The interactions, the forces that operate between the quantum objects, are added to the quantum objects. Instead of singular, independent objects, two-body systems or many-body systems were established as the base of matter. Between the bodies, interacting forces are effective in keeping the bodies together.[21]

These interactions are a composite of the bodies. Mostly they are forces of attraction and in the case of electro-magnetic forces they can also be forces of repulsion. One visualizes the interaction between the elementary particles as an interaction of elementary particles. The physicist Steven Weinberg puts it like this:

[20] Niels Bohr says: “I do not know what quantum mechanic is. I think we are dealing with some mathematical methods which are adequate for description of our experiments” (*Collected Works*. Volume 6, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers. 1985. p. 103).

[21] “The most convenient context for investigating the forces of nature is a system of two objects bound together by mutual attraction. The earth and the moon, for example, constitute the most readyly accessible system in which to observe the gravitational force. The hydrogen atom, consisting of an electron and a proton, has long been an essential testing ground for theories of the electromagnetic force. The deuterion, made up of a proton and a neutron, represents a model system for studies of the forces in the atomic nucleus. Now there is a bound system in which to investigate the force that acts between quarks, the constituents of protons, neutrons and many related particles. The system is called quarkonium, and it consists of a heavy quark bound to an equally massiv antiquark. The force at work in quarkonium is the strongest one known; it has come to be called the color force, and it is now thought to be the basis of all nuclear forces. Of the various two-body systems the simplest in some respects is the artificial atom called positronium” (Bloom, Ellot D. / Feldman, Gary J. „Quarkonium”. Scientific American 246 (5) 1982. pp. 42-53).

> At the present moment the closest we can come to a unified view of nature is a description in terms of elementary particles and their mutual interactions. …The most familiar are gravitation and electromagnetism, which, because of their long range, are experienced in the everyday world. Gravity holds our feet on the ground and the planets in their orbits. Electromagnetic interactions of electrons and atomic nuclei are responsible for all the familiar chemical and physical properties of ordinary solids, liquids and gases. Next, both in range and familiarity, are the 'strong' interactions, which hold protons and neutrons together in the atomic nucleus. The strong forces are limited in range to about 10^{-13} centimeter and so are quite insignificant in ordinary life, or even in the scale (10^{-8} centimeter) of the atom. Least familiar are the 'weak' interactions. They are of such short range (less than 10^{-15} centimeter) and are so weak that they do not seem to play a role in holding anything together.[22]

In this respect, the explanations enter into very difficult and subtle particulars. How, for example, can an electron which consists only of one particle have an interaction with another quantum object? What part of itself can it emit if it consists only of one particle? This question can be answered by the concept of interactions. In fact an electron does not exist of only a single particle exactly because the interaction of the electron is a part of it. In an article from 1978 about super-gravitation the two physicists Daniel Z. Freedman and Pieter von Nieuwenhuizen wrote in this regard that "The observed electron mass is the sum of the 'bare mass' and the 'self-energy' resulting from the interaction of the electron with its own electromagnetic field. Only the sum of the two terms is observable."[23]

What quantum physics knows about interactions is here summarized in the words of the physicist Gerhard 't Hooft who writes:

> An electron is surrounded by a cloud of virtual particles, which it continually emits and absorbs. This cloud does not consist of photons only, but also of pairs of charged particles, for example electrons and their anti-particles, the positrons. …Even a quark is surrounded by a cloud of gluons and pairs of quark and anti-quark.[24]

Singular, isolated, independent quarks, a phenomenon which is called 'confinement' in recent research, have never been observed. Quarks are captives, they cannot appear as a single quark but only as one of a pair or as one of a trio. When you try to separate two quarks by force, new quarks will appear between them, that combine into pairs and trios. Claudio Rebbi and other physicists have reported that: "between the quarks and gluons inside an elementary particle, additional quarks and gluons are continuously formed and after a short time again subside."[25] These clouds of virtual particles represent or produce interactions.

We have now arrived at the central core of quantum physics. It consists of a new view of reality, that no longer perceives singular, independent elements as the fundamental unit of reality but rather two-body systems or two states of a quantum object or two concepts, such as earth/moon, proton/electron, proton/neutron, quark/anti-quark, wave/measuring instrument, particle/measuring

---

[22] Weinberg, Steven. "Unified theories of elementary-particle interaction". Scientific American 231 (1) 1974. pp. 50-59.

[23] Friedman, Daniel Z. / Niuwenhuizen, Peter. „Supergravity and the unification of the laws of physics". Scientific American 238 (2) 1978. pp. 126-143.

[24] 'T Hooft, Gerhard. "Symmetrien in der Physik der Elementarteilchen". In: *Teilchen, Felder und Symmetrien*. Heidelberg: Spektrum. 1995. pp.40-57. (my own translation)

[25] Rebbi, Claudio. Quoted in: Frankfurt: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. September 5th, 2001 (my own translation).

instrument, twin photons, superpositions, spin up/spin down, matter/anti-matter, elementary particle/field of force, law of nature/matter. These systems cannot be separated into independent parts, reduced to two separate, independent bodies or states, nor is one fundamental and the other derived, as the metaphysical either-or scheme of substantialism or subjectivism usually tries to establish. They are not joined into a seamless unity either, they are not the same, they are not identical, they are not a mysterious wholeness as holism indicates. Finally, we cannot claim that they are nothing but mathematical models which we have constructed and which do not correspond to physical reality, as instrumentalism claims.

In physics, there is a fundamental reality that is not a one-body system but a two-body system or an assembly of bodies, a cloud of virtual particles, which surround the central or the 'naked' body. Between these bodies is an interaction that is one of the composites of these bodies. This understanding of physics cannot be dislodged and yet all our metaphysical schemata struggle against it. The cloud does not conform to our traditional metaphysical expectations of that which should delineate and underpin stability, substantiality and order. How can clouds be what we are used to calling the basic elements of matter? How can this small vibrating something be what generations of philosophers and physicists have been searching for in order to arrive at the core of matter or at the ultimate reality? Is this supposed to be it? From these little clouds we attempt to use metaphysical interpretation to distil something that has substance and that endures. Entirely within the sense of the substance metaphysics of Plato, Werner Heisenberg said that the mathematical forms are the idea of elementary particles and that the object of elementary particles is corresponding to this mathematical idea.[26] The physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker called mathematics 'the essence of nature.'[27] According to the physicist Herwig Schopper, fields of force are the ultimate reality.[28] Some of us want to see reality as a mysterious whole (holism) or dismiss it as a construction without any correspondence to empirical reality (instrumentalism). All of this only because we do not find it easy to admit that the complex interactions of the world in which we live have their roots in a reality that is itself a complex reality. It is impossible to escape from the entanglement of this world in quantum physics, it is impossible to find an elementary quantum object that is not dependent on other quantum objects or dependent on parts of itself, it is impossible to dissolve the double-sided character of quantum objects. The fundamental reality of our physical world consists of clouds of interacting quantum objects.

4. Conclusion

Reality is not static, solid or independent. It does not consist of singular, isolated material or immaterial factors, but of systems of dependent bodies.[29] Most systems consist of more than two bodies, but there is no system that consist of less than two bodies. In quantum physics we call such fundamental two-body systems earth/moon, electron/positron, quark/anti-quark, particle/field. Nagarjuna calls his systems or dependent pairs a mover/the distance to be moved, fire/fuel, agent/action, seer/view.

[26] Heisenberg, Werner. „Physik und Erkenntnis." Vol. 3. 1969-1976 . In: Heisenberg, Werner. *Gesammelte Werke.* 1985. 326; Heisenberg, Werner. Der Teil und das Ganze, München: Pieper Verlag. 1969. p. 260.

[27] Von Weizsäcker, Carl Friedrich. *Ein Blick auf Platon*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 1981. p.134.

[28] Schopper, Herwig. Frankfurt: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 5 May 1999.

[29] As mentioned in chapter 1, I use the expression 'body' synonymously with 'quantum object' or 'particle' or 'field' or 'system' or 'entity'. There is just a small difference between these expressions that can be neglected.

Both, quantum physics and Nagarjuna deal with two-body systems or two entities which have bodies that are neither properly separate, nor properly joined together. They do not fall into one, nor do they fall apart. These bodies are not independent and they cannot be observed singly because in their very existence and constitution they are dependent on each other and cannot exist or function independently of each other. They are entangled by interactions, even in a far distance. One of them cannot be reduced to the other, it is not possible to explain one of them on the basis of the other. The resultant systems have a fragile stability, the components of which are maintained by interactions and mutual dependencies that are sometimes known, sometimes not fully known and sometimes totally unknown, for example as with entangled twin photons.

What is reality? We have become accustomed to believe in a firm ground beneath our feet and fleeting clouds in the sky. The view of reality of Nagarjuna's philosophy and the ideas of complementarity, interactions and entanglement in quantum physics teach us something quite different that we could express metaphorically in the way that everything is built on sand and not even the grains of sand have a solid core or nucleus. Their stability is based on the unstable interactions of their component parts.

As we have seen, pratityasamutpada or the dependence of the objects is a key concept in quantum physics and in the philosophy of Nagarjuna. However, Nagarjuna has been associated with the term of sunyata, a term which denotes the substancelessness of the objects. This has led to the wrong impression that Nagarjuna wanted to distinguish himself from the traditional, original Buddhism, which has always, since the Pali Canon, used the term pratityasamutpada or *paticcasamuppada* as a cardinal doctrine to describe the fundamental reality. However, Nagarjuna used both terms synonymously: "Whatever is pratityasamutpada, that is explained to be sunyata, that, being a dependent designation, is itself the Middle Way" (MMK 24.18. Garfield's translation). Both terms have the meaning of dependence, both emphasize that not the behavior of bodies, but the behavior of something between them, may be essential. Both terms occur equally in the writings of Nagarjuna. In this important respect, the separation between Theravada and Mahayana is misleading and void. Pratityasamutpada unites all Buddhist traditions.

Appendix 1

Pratityasamutpada in Eastern and Western Modes of Thought

The term pratityasamutpada has a large scale of meanings: First, it is an indication of dependence. Dependent objects are in an intermediate state, they are not really separated and they are not one entity. In the second place, they rely on each other or they are influenced or determined by something else. Finally, their behavior is influenced by something between them, for example a mover is attracted by gravitational force, a seer is dependent on rays of light between his eyes and the seen object, the action of a piano player is determined by fine motor skills of his fingers, an actor is dependent on an action.

Pratityasamutpada is an indication of dependence and of something that happens between the objects. One object is bound to the other without being identical. Let us re-examine the meaning of pratityasamutpada.

A Summary of Citations

This part will deal with implicit interpretations of the meaning of pratityasamutpada, in terms of time, structure and space. The following citations and references illustrate the term pratityasamutpada, sometimes without explicitly mentioning the term at all. Pratityasamutpada is used in the meaning of:

1. Dependence in Nagarjuna's *Hymn to the Buddha:* "Dialecticians maintain that suffering is created by itself, created by (someone) else, created by both (or) without a cause, but You have stated that it is dependently born."[30]
2. An intermediate state in Nagarjuna's view: According to Nagarjuna the objects are neither together nor separated (Nagarjuna, MMK 6. 10).
3. Bondage in the Hevajra Tantra: "Men are bound by the bondage of existence and are liberated by understanding the nature of existence."[31]
4. An intermediate state by Roger Penrose: According to Roger Penrose "quantum entanglement is a very strange type of thing. It is somewhere between objects being separate and being in communication with each other."[32]
5. Something between the bodies in Albert Einstein's view: "A courageous scientific imagination was needed to realize fully that not the behavior of bodies, but the behavior of something between them, that is, the field, may be essential for ordering and understanding events."[33]
6. The mean between two or more things in modern mathematical modes of thought: "To quote Gioberti again: 'The mean between two or more things, their juncture, union, transit, passage, crossing, interval, distance, bond and contact – all these are mysterious,

[30] Nagarjuna, Catuhstava. „Hymn to the Buddha". In: Lindtner, Christian. *Nagarjuniana*. Copenhagen. 1982. p. 135.
[31] Farrow, G.W / Menon, I. *The concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. 2001. p. 10.
[32] Penrose, Roger. *The Large, the Small and the Human Mind*. Cambridge University Press. 2000. p. 66.
[33] Einstein, Albert / Infeld, Leopold. *The Evolution of Physics*. London: Cambridge University Press. 1938. pp. 311-312.

for they are rooted in the continuum, in the infinite. The interval that runs between one idea and another, one thing and another, is infinite, and can only be surpassed by the creative act. This is why the dynamic moment and dialectic concept of the mean are no less mysterious than those of the beginning and the end. The mean is a union of two diverse and opposite things in a unity. It is an essentially dialectic concept, and involves an apparent contradiction, namely, the identity of the one and the many, of the same and the diverse. This unity is simple and composite; it is unity and synthesis and harmony. It shares in two extremes without being one or the other. It is the continuum, and therefore the infinite. Now, the infinite identically uniting contraries clarifies the nature of the interval. In motion, in time, in space, in concepts, the discrete is easy to grasp, because it is finite. The continuum and the interval are mysterious, because they are infinite."[34]

Appendix 2

What is quantum entanglement? A short answer by two articles:

1. "Entanglement is a strange feature of quantum physics, the science of the very small. It's possible to link together two quantum particles - photons of light or atoms, for example — in a special way that makes them effectively two parts of the same entity. You can then separate them as far as you like, and a change in one is instantly reflected in the other. This odd, faster than light link, is a fundamental aspect of quantum science. Erwin Schrödinger, who came up with the name "entanglement" called it "the characteristic trait of quantum mechanics." Entanglement is fascinating in its own right, but what makes it really special are dramatic practical applications that have become apparent in the last few years."[35]
2. "This weird quantum effect inextricably links two or more objects in such a way that measurements carried out on one immediately change the properties of its partners, no matter how far apart they are. Quantum effects, such as entanglement, are usually confined to the invisible microscopic world and are detected only indirectly using precision instruments."[36]

[34] Gioberti, Vincenzo. „Della Protologia." Vol. 1. Naples. 1864. p. 160. In: Zellini, Paolo. *A brief History of Infinity*. London: Penguin Books. 2005. p. 53.

[35] Clegg, Brian. „The Strange World of Quantum Entanglement." California Literary Review. 20 March 2007. http://calitreview.com/51 accessed on October 2011.

[36] Merali, Zeeya. „Quantum Effects brought to Light: Results of Entanglement made visible to Human Eeyes." Naturenews. 28 April 2011. Doi:10.1038/news.2011.252. http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110428/full/news.2011.252.html accessed on 7 October 2011.

Bibliography

Bloom, Ellot D. / Feldman, Gary J. „Quarkonium”. Scientific American 246 (5) 1982.

Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the implicate Order*. London: Routledge Classics. 2000.

Bohr, Niels. *Collected Works*. Volume 6, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers. 1985

Clegg, Brian. „The Strange World of Quantum Entanglement.” California Literary Review. 20 March 2007. <http://calitreview.com/51> accessed on 7 October 2011.

Davidson, Donald. „The myth of the subjective”. In: Davidson, Donald. *Subjective, intersubjective, objective*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1988.

Davies, P.C.W. *The Ghost in the Atom*. Cambridge. 1986.

Einstein, Albert / Infeld, Leopold. *The Evolution of Physics*. London: Cambridge University Press. 1938.

Einstein, Albert. *Quantenmechanik und Wirklichkeit, 'Dialectica 2'*. 1948.

Farrow, G.W / Menon, I. *The concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. 2001.

Friedman, Daniel Z. / Niuwenhuizen, Peter. „Supergravity and the unification of the laws of physics”. Scientific American 238 (2) 1978.

Garfield, Jay L. *The fundamental wisdom of the middle way: Nagarjuna's 'Mulamadhyamakakarika' (MMK)*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996.

Gioberti, Vincenzo. „Della Protologia.” Vol. 1. Naples. 1864. p. 160. In: Zellini, Paolo. *A brief History of Infinity*. London: Penguin Books. 2005.

Hawkins, Steven. “The Objections of an Unashamed Reductionist.” In: Penrose, Roger. *The Large, the Small and the Human Mind*, Cambridge University Press. 2000.

Heisenberg, Werner. „Physik und Erkenntnis.” Vol. 3. 1969-1976 . In: Heisenberg, Werner. *Gesammelte Werke.* 1985.

Heisenberg, Werner. Der Teil und das Ganze, München: Pieper Verlag. 1969.

Kalupahana, David J. *Mulamadhyamakakarika Nagarjuna: The philosophy of the middle way*. India: Motilal Banarsidass. 1999.

Keown, Damien. *A Dictionary of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003.

Lindtner, Christian. *Nagarjuniana: Studies in the writings and philosophy of Nagarjuna*. India: Motilal Banarsidass. 2002.

Merali, Zeeya. „Quantum Effects brought to Light: Results of Entanglement made visible to Human Eeyes." Naturenews. 28 April 2011. Doi:10.1038/news.2011.252. <http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110428/full/news.2011.252.html> accessed on 7 October 2011.

Nagarjuna, Catuhstava. „Hymn to the Buddha". In: Lindtner, Christian. *Nagarjuniana*. Copenhagen. 1982.

Penrose, Roger. *The Large, the Small and the Human Mind*. Cambridge University Press. 2000.

Rabten, Geshe. *Mahamudra. Der Weg zur Erkenntnis der Wirklichkeit*. Switzerland: Le Mont Pélèrin. 2002.

Rebbi, Claudio. Quoted in: Frankfurt: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 5 September 2001.

Rock, Irvin. *Perception*. New York: H.W. Freeman & Company. 1995.

Schopper, Herwig. Frankfurt: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 5 May 1999.

T Hooft, Gerhard. „Symmetrien in der Physik der Elementarteilchen". In: *Teilchen, Felder und Symmetrien*. Heidelberg: Spektrum. 1995.

Tarab Tulku Rinpoche. UD-Newsletter N. 4, January 2006.

Vetter, Tilmann. „On the Authenticity of the Ratnavali." In: *Asiatische Studien XLVI*, 1992.

Von Weizsäcker, Carl Friedrich. *Ein Blick auf Platon*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 1981.

Webster's New World Dictionary, New York. 1968.

Weinberg, Steven. "Unified theories of elementary-particle interaction". Scientific American 231 (1) 1974.

Zeilinger, Anton. Interview in the German newspaper Tagesspiegel 20 December 1999.

Problem of Hetu & Paccaya in Abhidharma Philosophy

Prof. Bimalendra Kumar
Dept. of Pali & Buddhist Studies,
Banaras Hindu University

Prof. G.C. Pande in his work '*Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*'[1] speaks of the theory of relation (*paccaya)* while discussing the principle of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Theory of relation (*paccaya)* is a law explaining the existence of the *dhammas*, being related by some relations. It is further extension of the law of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Things come to existence in our day-to-day life. The law of dependent origination explains that they come into existence; depending upon some other factors.[2] The theory of relation explains that such dependence on the other *dhammas* is possible due to some relations. In other words, *Paṭiccasamuppāda* explains the process of existence of conditioned things. The relation (*paccaya*) explains the relation existing between different phases coming into existence. Such relations are also explained in conditioned things only.[3]

The *Paṭṭhāna-pakaraṇa*, the last and seventh book of *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* deals with the causation and mutual relationship of phenomena. It gives a detailed account of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. In the form of twenty-four *paccayas* mentions the twelve system of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. A *paccaya* meant originally a 'causal condition' and was used along with *hetu,* so that the combination of *hetu* and *paccaya* signified "cause and condition" in a general way. The Buddhist emphasis on impermanence and determinate sequences of events tended to invest all psycho-physical factors with a dynamic and causal aspect. It is in this context that the Abhidhamma develops its theory of *paccayas.* It has been observed that the relation between the *Nidānas* is not uniform. Thus, the relation between *avijjā* and *saṅkhāra* is not identical with that between *Jāti* and *Jarāmaraṇa*. And neither is identical with that between *Viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa*. But one can still say that in every case the antecedent in the sequence of *paṭiccasamuppāda* is a condition necessary and sufficient to the subsequent. This is the implication of the method of specifying the relation between the terms in the *anuloma* and *viloma* orders. The former order shows that the *paccaya* is sufficient to the *paccayuppanna,* the latter that it is necessary. The attempt to specify exactly the nature of *paccaya* in each case probably led to the development of the Abhidharma theory of the *paccaya*.[4]

A relation has four constituents: The one is that which is related; the other that to which one is related; the third one the relation and the fourth one refers to those who do not come under such relation? The first one technically, called a *paccayadhamma*, the second one as *paccayuppannadhamma*, the third one as *paccaya* and the fourth one as *paccanīkadhamma.* There are twenty-four types of relations, which have been enumerated, explained and illustrated in the *Paṭṭhāna pakaraṇa*, the seventh and last book of the *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka*. A brief description of these relations are given below:

---

[1] G.C. Pande, *Origins of Buddhism, Motilal Banarasidas*, Delhi, Third Edition, 1983.

[2] 'Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imassa uppādā idaṃ upajjati Imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati- Majjhima-Nikāya, vol. Ii (Ed.) Bhikshu Jagdish Kashyap, Nalanda, 1958, p. 257.

[3] Paṭṭhānanayo pana āhaccapaccayaṭṭhitaṃ ārabbha pavuccati-Abhidhamatthasaṅgaho with Vibhāvanī Tīkā (Ed.) Revatadharma Shāstri, Varanasi, 1965, p. 210.

[4] cf. G.C. Pande, Origins of Buddhism, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, Third Edition, 1983, p. 436.

1. *Hetu-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which one of the six *hetus* (roots) is a *paccayad-dhamma*. A consciousness associated with that or material qualities produced by that, is a *paccayuppannadhamma*. The relation between *paccayadhamma* and the *paccayuppannad-hamma* is known as *Hetu-Paccaya*. In the *Hetu-Paccaya*, the paccaya-dhamma is one of the six roots. There arises a consciousness being associated with root and it also generates material qualities (*rūpa*). The consciousness, arising in this way, and the material qualities generated thereby are the *paccayuppanna-dhamma*. The relation between the two is the *Hetu-paccaya.* The rest are *Paccanīka-dhamma*. For instance, due to *Lobha* (greed), there arises a *Lobha-mūlaka-citta*. It inspires one to lean towards the belongings of others and that brings changes in his material body. It is the generation of material qualities.
2. *Ālambana-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* is any one of the six types of objects and the *paccayuppannadhamma* is a consciousness, associated with a number of psychic factors, which arise following that object. For instance, a devotee sees an image of the Buddha. Immediately, there arises the saluting consciousness (*vandana-citta*). Here, the image of the Buddha is the *paccaya-dhamma* and the saluting consciousness is the *Paccayuppanna-dhamma.* The relation between the two is the *Alambana-Paccaya*.
3. *Adhipati-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* is one of the objects having potentiality to exercise predominant influence and the *paccayuppanna-ahamma* is a consciousness, the associated psychic factors, which are influenced by it. Truth and sacrificing consciousness may be the example.
4. *Anantara-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* is the preceding factor and the *paccayuppannadhamma* is the succeeding factor. For example, in the course of cognition (*citta-vīthi*), the *pañcadvāravajjanacitta* is the *paccayadhamma,* being the preceding consciousness and the *cakkhuviññāna* is the *paccayuppannadhamma* as the succeeding consciousness.
5. *Samanantara-Paccaya*: It is identical with *Anantara-Paccaya* in meaning, there being difference only in respect of nomenclature-*"yo anantarapaccayo, sveva samanantarapaccayo, Byañjanamattameva hettha nānam, upacayasantati a disu viya, ddhivacananirutti dukādisu viya ca, atthato pana nānam natthi."* Ācarya Buddhghosa says that *Anantarapaccaya* is concerned with the succession of states of consciousness (*atthānantaratā*) only and the *Samanantara-paccaya* is simple with their temporal sequence (*kālanantaratā*)- *"Addhānantatatāya-anantarapaccayo, kālanantaratāya samanantarapaccayo."* Again, *Anantarapaccaya* refers to the aspect of succession only while the *Samanantarapaccaya* refers to the absence of any gap (*sanṭṭhānābhava*) between the two states of consciousness occruing in succession-*"natthi etesaṃ ti hi anantarā, saṭṭhābhāvato suṭṭhu anantarā ti Samanantarā."*
6. *Sahajata-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* and the *paccayupanna dhamma* are born simultaneously. For example, *citta* and *cetasika.*
7. *Aññamañña-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* and the *paccayup-pannadhamma* support each other in maintaining their existence. The example of three sticks existing supporting each other may be understood.
8. *Nissaya-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which *paccayadhamma* becomes the base for the *paccayuppannadhamma*. Again, the *paccayuppannadhamma* becomes the base of *paccayadhamma*, for the arising of another *paccayupannadhamma.* In this way, the process of support and supplement is maintained.

9. *Upanissaya-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which *paccayadhamma* serves as a sufficing condition for the *paccayuppannadhamma*. The previously arising consciousness and the consciousness arising later are related by these relations. It is defined as-*"purimā purimā kusalā-dhammā pacchimānaṃ kuslanānaṃ dhammānaṃ upanissaya-paccayena paccayo."*

10. *Purejāta-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* is born firth than the *paccayupannadhamma*. For instance-*cakkhu* and *cakkhuviññāṇa.*

11. *Pacchājata-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* is born later and the *paccayuppannadhamma* is born prior to it. It can be illustrated by an example of young vulture and *āhāra-sañcetanā*.

12. *Āsevana-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* when repeated adds the strength, and proficiency to *paccayuppannadhamma.* For example-the preceding lessons of books etc.

13. *Kamma-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* is an action and the *paccayuppannadhamma* is its resultant, as well as the material quality, produced by them.

14. *Vipāka-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which *paccayadhamma* and the *paccayuppannadhamma* both are the resultants and harmonious state among them is maintained.

15. *Āhāra-Paccaya*: It means that the *paccayadhamma* is a type of *āhāra* (food) and the *paccayuppannadhamma* is the energy generated by it.

16. *Indriya-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* is the *Rūpa-indriya* or *Nāma-indriya* and the *paccayuppannadhamma* is a consciousness that arises due to that. For example-*cakkhu* and *cakkhu-viññāṇa.*

17. *Jhāna-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which *paccayadhamma* may be one of the *Jhāna*-factors and *paccayuppannadhamma* may be a consciousness arising because of that. It may be understood in terms of *Jhānaṅgas* and the *Pathama-jhāna citta*. It is defined as-*"jhānaṅgāni jhāna-sampayuttakānaṃ taṃ samutthānaṃ ca rūpānaṃ jhānapaccayena paccayo."*

18. *Magga-Paccaya:* It is a type of relation in which *paccayadhamma* is one of the eight constituents of path (*maggaṅga*), and all, the types of consciousness and mental concomitants arising due to that and all material qualities co-existing with the types of *Sahetuka* consciousness is the *Paccayuppannadhamma.*

19. *Sampayutta-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* and *paccayupannadhamma* are very closely associated. The *citta* and *cetasika* may be its example.

20. *Vippayutta-Paccaya*: It is a type of relation in which the *paccayadhamma* and *paccayuppannadhammas* are completely opposite in their nature and still function together. The one material aggregate and the four immaterial aggregates functioning together may be the example.

21. *Atthi-Paccaya*: It refers to a type of relation which explains that the existence of the *paccayuppannadhamma* depends upon the existence of the *paccayadhamma*. It means where there is the *paccayadhamma,* there comes to be the *paccayuppannadhamma*. In the case of *citta* and *cittajarūpa, citta* is *paccayadhamma* and the *cittaja-rūpa* is *paccayuppannadhamma.*

22. *Avigata-Paccaya*: It is defined in the manner of *atthi-paccaya*, the former recognizing the 'non-pastness' of the first term, while the latter stresses upon the co-presence' of the same. When the *paccayadhamma* is an ultimate reality that is present at that moment and exhibiting

its characteristic, it is that of *Atthi-paccaya*. But, when a *paccayadhamma* is an ultimate reality that has not disappeared and ceased, it is that of *Avigata-paccaya*. The *Avigata-paccaya* explains continuity better than the *Atthi-paccaya*.

23. *Natthi-Paccaya*: It is at type of relation in which after the cessation of *paccayadhamma*, there is the arising of the *paccayuppannadhamma*. As for example, when the *cakkhuviññāṇa* arises and disappears, there is the arising of *sampaṭicchana-citta*.

24. *Vigata-Paccaya*: It is essentially the same as *Natthi-paccaya*. When the *paccayadhamma* are absent because they have ceased after going through the nascent, static and nascent phases, they are those of *Natthi-paccaya*. But, when the *paccayadhamas* have disappeared after ceasing, they are those of *Vigata-paccaya*. In other words, *Natthi paccaya* may point to the momentary destruction, while *vigata-paccaya* points to gradual disappearance.

These are the twenty-four types of relations through which, the mutual communication and practical operation etc. of mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*) are explained by the Abhidhammikas. It is to be noted that some of the *paccayas* have already been described in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*[5] and the *Kathāvatthu*.[6] But the book *Paṭṭhāna*[7] can be mentioned at the first to group them into a body of twenty-four. It is a book of late period, that is why, it has close resemblance to the *Sāriputra-abhidharmas'āstra*[8] in which ten-conditions are mentioned and to the *Vijñānakāya pāds'āstra*[9] and the *Jñānaprasthāna-s'āstra*[10] in which some conditions are recorded. It seems that two Abhidharma tradition i.e. Theravada and Sarvastivada might have began with a theory of four basic relations.[11] Later on, Theravāda Abhidhammma expanded this into twenty four. Mahāsānghika and Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma also expanded it into ten relations and four relations respectively. At the time of Ācārya Nāgārjuna, there were still four types of relations. The remaining twenty relations accounted for every type of causal correlation that the Abhidhammikas envisaged as a result of dealing with the wide variety of physical and psychological states, mentioned in the discourses of the Buddha. It appears as if the Theravādin Abhidhammikas went further to analyze every form of relation existing between the dhammas, while the Sarvāstivādins Abhidhammikas were quite satisfied with the analysis of the most important forms of relations which were only four in number. It may be presumed that there is no such theory of relations (*paccaya*) in the early discourses and that this is an innovation of the Abhidhamma. One certainly cannot find an elaborate theory of relations during the early period. Yet, even in their discursive treatment, the discourses refer to relations such as roots *(mūlaṃ),* dominances (*adhipateyya*), immediacy (*anantara*) and so on. The Abhidhammikas, in contrast, were compelled to focus on relations because of their extensive but non-discursive enumeration and classification of events. Without a process of synthesis, enumeration and classification would have left them a mass of disconnected events. The theory of relation thus serves the same function that of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda)* fulfilled in the early discourses.[12] Ācārya Buddhaghosa point out that the emphasis in the law of dependent origination is not on origination

[5] cf. Paṭisambhidāmagga (Ed.) Bhikshu J. Kashyap, Pali Publication Board, Nalanda, 1960.

[6] Kathāvatthu (Ed.) Bhikshu J. Kashyap, Nalanda Edition, Nalanda, 1961, p. 440.

[7] Paṭṭhāna-pakaraṇa vol. I (Ed.) Bhikshu J. Kashyap, Nalanda, 1961, p.3.

[8] cf. Encyclopaedia of Bddhism (Ed.) G.P. Malalasekera, Ceylon, 1961, Vol.I, pp. 68-71.

[9] Abhidharma-vijñānakāyapādas'astra by Devaśarman, TS No. 1539 (Vol.26), 547b.

[10] Cf. Jñānaprasthāna S'āstra (Ed.). Shanti Bhikshu Shastri, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, 1961.

[11] Catvārah pratyayā hetus'calambanamantaraṃ/ Tathāvadhipateyañca pratyayo nāsti pancamaḥ//-Abhidharmakos'a, Chapter II, verse 61.

[12] David J. Kalupahana, A History of Buddhist Philosophy, Continuities and Discontinuities, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1992, p. 149.

(*uppāda)* but on conditions and relations. He says that – *paticcasamuppādo ti paccayadhammā viditabbā*.[13] Vasubandhu identifies *Pratītyasamutpāda* with all the *samskṛtadharmas*.[14] Ācārya Aniruddha in his work '*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaho* has explained the causal states, acting as relations to the conditioned things. He declares that the law of dependent origination is marked by the simple happening of a state dependent on its antecedent state and the theory of relations is said with reference to the existence of conditions that relate to one another.[15] This reference has been made by Ācārya Aniruddha[16] to Ācārya Buddhaghosa who has mixed these theories in his magnum opus work *Visuddhimagga.* The idea of plurality of conditions (*hetu-samūha*)[17] has sometimes given rise to an erroneous distinctions between the words *hetu* and *paccaya,* taking the former to stand for the term 'cause' and the latter for the term 'condition'. Buddhaghosa lists *hetu* and *paccaya* in the list of six synonyms for the word cause, saying that although the words are different, they stand for the same meaning. They are *hetu, paccaya, kārana, nidāna, sambhava* and *pabhava*.[18] *Paccaya* is that depending on which the fruit of effect derived come – *paticca etasmā etīti paccayo*. *Hetu* is that by which the effect is established-'*hīnoti patitthā ti etenāti hetu.*[19] In characteristics, a cause has the characteristics of rendering service. For whatever, state renders service to the arising of a state is said to be its cause. Thus, it is condition in the sense of root, 'cause' in the sense of rendering service-*iti mūlatthena hetu, upakārakatthena paccayo ti'*.[20]

In the *Paṭṭhāna-aṭṭhakathā, hetu* has been defined as root condition and cause-thus the root condition is cause-'*hetu ca so paccayo ca ti hetu paccayo'*.[21] Being condition it is the cause, by being condition it is cause-*"hetu hutvā paccayo, hetubhāvana paccayo it"*.[22] Condition is an equivalent word for part of speech, reason, root-'*hetu ti vacanāvaya-kāranamūlānametaṃ adhivacanaṃ.*[23] It is said that whatever state stands or arises through not letting go another state, the latter is the cause of the former – *"yo hi dhammo yam dhammaṃ appaccakkhāya tiṭṭhati va upajjati va, so tassa paccayo ti vuttaṃ hoti"*.[24]

Nettipakaraṇa, one of the three non-canonical texts also holds the distinction between *hetu* and *paccaya*. Discussing requisites or conditions (*parikkhāra-hāra*), it says, "two things give rise to or produce (a phenomenon), cause and condition".[25] Explaining the characteristics of a cause and condition, this treatise points out that the cause has the characteristics of being unique and the condition the characteristics of being common.[26] The example of the sprout is given to illustrate this conditions, the seed is the unique 'cause' for the arising of the sprout while the earth and water,

---

13 Visuddhimagga (Ed.) Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, Bauddha Bharati, Varanasi, 1977, p. 437.

14 Abhidharmakos'a, chapter II, p. 73

15 "Tattha labbhāvabhāribhāvākāramattopalakkhito paṭiccasamuppādanayo. Paṭṭhānanayo pana āhcca-paccayaṭṭhitiṃ ārabbha pavuccate. Abhidhammatthasaṅgaho with Vibhāvanī Ṭīkā (Ed.) Revatadharma Shāstri, Varanasi, 1965, p. 210.

16 'Ubhayam pana vomissetva papañcenti ācariyā'-Abhidhammatthasaṅgaho with Navanītaṭīkā (Ed.) Revatadharma Shāstri, Varanasi, 1964, p. 140.

17 Visuddhimagga, op. cit., p. 437.

18 'Paccayo, hetu, kāranaṃ, nidānaṃ, sambhavo, pabhavo ti ādi atthato ekaṃ, byañjanato nānaṃ'- Ibid, p. 450

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Paṭṭhāna-aṭṭhakathā (Ed.) Mahesh Tiwary, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, 1972, p. 70

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., p. 71.

25 'Dve dhamma jānayanti-hetu ca paccayo ca-Nettipakaraṇa, (Ed.) E. Hardy, P.T.S., 1961, p. 78.

26 'Asādhāranalakkhano hetu, Sādhāranalakkhano paccayo'-Ibid.

being common, are only 'conditions.[27] The distinction concludes with "intrinsic nature is the cause, extrinsic nature the condition, cause is internal, condition external; the cause generates, the condition supports, that which is unique is the cause, that which is common is the condition."[28] We agree with Ñānamoli's comment, on the analysis of the category of requisites (*parikkhāra-hāra*) in the *Nettipakaraṇa*, that the distinction between *hetu* and *paccaya* seems peculiar to his work and that in the *suttas*, no such difference is discernible.[29]

In a discussion on conditioned origination in the text *Peṭakopadesa*, we find the following distinction noted between cause (*hetu*) and condition (*paccaya)*-'the cause is the 'own-nature' *(svabhāva);* the condition is the 'other nature' (*parabhāva*). The cause is the internal (to the sequences, series, stream of a person's thoughts); the condition is external.[30] Further the text states that skill in attainment and skill in steadiness are the cause, and skill in resort and skill in health are the conditions skill in emerging is the cause and the health the condition. Pleasure is the cause and non-affliction the condition.[31]

In the text *Abhidhammāvatāra*, one of the nine manuals of *Abhidhamma*, Ācārya Buddhadutta has also described the difference between *hetu* and *paccaya*. *Hetu* has been stated as one which gives birth and *paccaya* as which nourishes (*anupālaka*). For instance, the seed *(bīja)* is the *hetu* for sprout (*aṅkura*). The earth, moisture etc. are the *paccaya*. Again, *paccaya* is a serviceable factor and *hetu* is designated as *sambhava, pabhava* etc.[32]

The Sarvastivādins have made a distinction between *hetu* and *pratyaya*. They formulated a theory of six *hetus* and four *pratyayas*. The six *hetus* are *kārana hetu, sahabhu hetu, sabhāga hetu, samprayuktaka hetu, sarvatraga hetu and vipāka hetu.*[33] The four *pratyayas* are *hetu, samanantara, ālambana* and *adhipati*.[34] It shows that the Sarvastivādins were the first to make a distinction between *hetu* and *pratyaya.* But, as Stcherbatsky remarks, "There is no hard and fast line of demarcation, at that stage of doctrine, between what a cause and what a condition is. The list of six causes seems to be a later doctrine which came to be graft itself upon the original system of four conditions."[35]

Yas'omitra says that no distinction is drawn between *hetu* and *pratyaya* and that both are synonymous.[36] The exposition of *hetus* is based on an examination of causes by way of non-obstacle *(avighna-bhāva),* co-existence *(sahabhutva)*, identity *(sadṛśatva)* etc., whereas that of *pratyayas* is based on an examination of causes by way of immediate contiguity *(samanantara),* etc.[37]

---

27 'yathā aṅkurassa nibbattiyā bījaṃ a sādhāranaṃ pathana api ca sādharana Aṅkurassa hi paṭhavī api ca paccayo' –Ibid.

28 'Iti svabhāvo hetu, parabhāvo paccayo, ajjhattiko hetu, bāhiro paccayo, janako hetu, pariggahako paccayo, asādhārano hetu, sādhārano paccayo'-Ibid.

29 Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu-The Guide (Translation of Nettipakarana), P.T.S., 1962, p. 111, n. 456/2.

30 'Sabhāvo hetu, parabhāvo paccayo. Parabhāvassa paccayo hetu pi sabhāvassa hetu ya parabhāvassa kassaci paccayo. Avutto hetu vutto paccayo. Ajjhattiko hetu, bāhiro paccaya'-Peṭakopadesa, A. Barua, P.T.S.,London, 1949, p. 104.

31 'Parikkhāro ti samapattikosallaṃ ca dhitikosallaṃ ca hetu, yaṃ ca gocarakosallaṃ yaṃ ca Kallantakosallaṃ paccayo Vodānakosallaṃ hetu, Kallaṃ paccayo, Sukhaṃ hetu, abyapajjaṃ paccayo- Ibid., p. 202.

32 'Janako hetu akkhāto, paccayo anupālaka Hetuaṅkurassa bījaṃ tu, paccaya paṭhavādayo-Abhidhammavātāra (Ed.) Mahesh Tiwary, Pali Parivena, Delhi, 1988, p. 173.

33 'Kāranaṃ sahabhuscaiva sabhāgaḥ samprayuktakāḥ, sarvatrago vipākakhyaḥ saḍvidho heturiṣyati//-Abhidharmakośa, chapter II, verse 61.

34 Ibid.

35 T. Stcherbatsky, Buddhist Logic, vol. I, Leningrad,1930, p. 138.

36 Abhidharmakos'avyākhyā, I, p. 188.

37 Ibid.

According to the view of Vaibhāṣika, there are also six causes as mentioned in the *Samyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya* or *Miśrakābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra*.[38] There are six kinds of causes *(hetu)* so called the efficient cause *(kāranahetu)*. The simultaneous cause *(sabhathutetu)*, the homogenous causes *(sabhāgahetu),* the pervasive cause *(sarvatragahetu),* the associated cause *(samprayuktaka hetu),* and the cause of retribution *(vipākahetu)*.[39] It is further stated in this text that "All conditions are laid hold of by the four conditions, that one that opens the way by the expedience of successive condition (perhaps this condition is similar to the *samanantara-pratyaya*, but is not exact), that one which is responsible and dependent by the expedient of the objective condition *(ālambana-pratyaya),* that one that is not an obstacle and separated, (so it is called as) the dominant condition *(adhipatipratyaya)* and that one that is the seed of phenomena by the expedience of the root-condition *(hetu-pratyaya).*

The relation of a theory to the phenomena as explained by the early Vaibhāṣika is an expedient relation, not one of the sequence. This theory is not regarded as an event in time, but a general proposition as it turned out in the classical interpretation by virtue of a differential equation of phenomenal series. Therefore, this is indeed a statement about causes, but it is a statement about occurrences of which we could say that whenever they happen something else happens. It seems rather to be referring to something which is underlying the phenomena, which have to power of producing to phenomena. In the *Mis'rakathidharma hṛdayaśāstra*, it is also called as the condition as much as the meaning of supporting dominant and cause "(That all) phenomena follow the four conditions has already been said by the Buddha."[40]

It may be noted that Ācārya Buddhadutta and Ācārya Aniruddha have reduced all the relations into four in the texts namely *Abhidhammāvatāra*[41] and *Abhidhammatthasangaho*[42] respectively. There four relations are namely - (i) *Ārammana-paccaya* (object condition), (ii) *Upanissaya-paccaya* (sufficing condition), (iii) *Kamma-paccaya* (action-condition) and (iv*) Atthi-paccaya* (presence condition). So these four relations differ with the four basic relations discussed earlier. It arises an inquisitiveness to know that why the later Abhidhammikas differed with the four basic relations in reducing all the relations?

It seems to me that in process of functioning in day-to-day life, it has been marked that some of the relations are similar in nature, though for the sake of understanding they have been given different names. Their close study may reveal that relating surviving in different names during the time of the Buddha and after that have been collected together. There is also a possibility that

[38] Saṃyuktabhidharmahṛdayaśastra (TS No. 1552) a work of Dharmatrāta and available in Chinese version is an expository treatise of Sarvāstivāda philosophy. It was translated into Chinese by Sanghavarman and others and translated into English by Bart Dassein as Saṃyuktabhidharmahṛdayaśastra:Heart of Scholasticism with Miscellaneous Addition and published in 3 volumes by Motilal Banarasi das Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi in 1999. Prof. Lalji has reconstructed the Sanskrit title of this work as Miśrakābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra in his book Miśkrābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra of Dharmatrāta (Hindi Translation), published by Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi in 2006.

[39] Miśkrābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra of Dharmatrāta (Hindi Translation) by Lalji 'Shravak', Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, 2006, p. 74.

[40] 'sabbe panime catuvīsati paccayā yathārahaṃ ārammana-upanissaya-kamma-atthi-paccayanāmāvasena catusu paccayesu saṅgaham gacchanti ti veditabbaṃ'-Abhidhammāvatāra, op.cit., p. 202.

[41] cf 'Kāranaṃ sahabhuscaiva sabhāgaḥ samprayuktakāḥ, sarvatrago vipākakhyaḥ saḍvidho heturiṣyati//-Abhidharmakośa, chapter II, verse 61. Ibid., p. 88. cf. Catvāraḥ pratyayā uktāḥ hetupratyayatā samanantarapratyayatā ālambanapratyayatā adhipatipratyayatā ce'ti.-Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, II-61, p. 98.

[42] 'ārammanūpanissaya-kamma-atthi paccayesu ca sabbe pi paccayā samodhānaṃ gacchanti -Abhidhammatthasaṅgaho, op. cit., p. 230.

there may be some niceties in understanding the underlying sequence and ideas of these relations. *Hetu-paccaya* of the four basic relations has been taken as *kamma-paccaya* of the reducible four relations, since *kamma-paccaya* is the relations of actions-moral *(kusala)* or immoral *(akusala)* and these actions are being guided by the roots *(hetu)* i.e. *kusala hetu* and *akusala hetu.*

Adhipati-paccaya has been put as *Atthi-paccaya* since it is dependent on the existence of dominant things. *Samanantara-paccaya* may be considered as *Upanissaya-paccaya. Arammana-paccaya* is common in both early and later Abhidhamma tradition. This condition stands for the objective support for the manifestation of mental phenomena.[43]

Some of the modern scholars have examined the problem related with theories of causality, considering both the theory of the twelve *nidanas* of dependent arising and the Patthana's theory of twenty-four causal conditions *(paccaya).* Noa Ronkin has discussed it in her book *Early Buddhist Metaphysics: The Making of A Philosophical Tradition*. She draws attention to certain peculiarities of the Nikāya notion of the causation: it concerns 'not the production of entities but the arising and ceasing of psycho-physical processes', not physical causality but connections between mental conditions, not a binary connection between a single cause and a single effect but ' manifoldness of supporting conditions'; and while the latter is not to be construed in terms of a 'network of interrelated conditions, it none the less does involve some sense of mutual conditioning.' She concludes 'that the *Paṭṭhāna* theory of *paccaya* is not about causation at all' in the sense of causal production; rather it is 'intended to account… for the individuality of each and every dhamma as a capacity of a certain mental event that occurs within a network of inter-relations of causal conditioning, but this, she suggests involves a circularity since causal conditions individuate dhammas only if the latter are already individuated.'[44]

She emphasizes that there appear to be no grounds for distinguishing between *hetu* and *pacaaya* as 'cause' and 'condition' respectively in the *Nikāyas*, such a distinction is characteristic of especially the Sarvastivādin theory of the six *hetus* and *pratyayas* although she suggests that something of distinction is found within Theravādin sources as well, arguing that the *Patthana'*s and subsequent commentarial understanding of *hetupaccaya* has a certain affinity with the Sarvastivādin discussions.

Rupert Gethin does not agree with her as understanding of *hetupaccaya* as referring to an 'essential causal condition' that individuates its related dhamma and can be equated with *svabhāva*. In his review article, he presents the Theravādin views and says that *hetupaccaya* refers to the way in which six specific *dhammas (alobha, adosa, amoha, lobha, dosa and moha)* act as 'cause' (*hetu)* by being a 'root' (*mūla)* in relation to certain other dhammas that are associated it and have arisen together with it in the same moment. He says that Ronkin's misunderstanding appears to be based in part on conflating the identification of svabhāva as the 'cause' *(hetu*) of a *dhamma* discussed in the texts *Nettipakaraṇa*[45] and *Peṭakopadesa*[46] with the *Paṭṭhāna's* understanding of *hetupaccaya.*[47] Yet the position of *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa* in the development of the specifically Theravādin Abhidhamma remains problematic. These texts seem not to be based on exclusively Theravādin traditions.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Quoted in The 'On the Nature of Dhammas: A Review Article' by Rupert Gethin in Buddhist Studies Review, The Journal of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies, U.K., Vol. 22, Part 2, 2005, p. 191.

[45] cf. Nettipakarana, op. citt., p. 78-81.

[46] Peṭakopadesa, op.citt.p. 158.

[47] Ibid., pp. 191-192.

As Theravada Abhidhamma states that *Hetupaccaya* is the name of a relation in which one of the six *hetus* is a *paccayadhamma.* Ledi Sayadaw also interprets *hetupaccaya* as greed (*lobha)*, antipathy (*dosa*), ignorance (*moha*) non-greediness (*alobha)*, friendliness (*dosa*) and right understanding (*amoha*).[48] A consciousness associated with any one of the six *hetus* or the material qualities produced by that, is *paccayuppannadhamma*.[49]

Thus, it can be concluded that there was no difference between *hetu* and *paccaya* as 'cause' and 'condition' respectively in the *Nikāyas*. However, there is some distinction of *hetu* and *pacccaya* in the Abhidhamma texts and their commentaries. There is some resemblance of the understanding of *hetupaccaya* based upon *Paṭṭhana* and its commentaries with the concepts of six kinds of *Hetupratyaya* of Sarvāstivāda tradition. Noa Ronkin says that the Theravadin *Paṭṭhana* theory of *paccaya* and the very distinction between *hetu* and *paccaya,* were the result of the contemporary intellectual milieu determined by the Abhidhamma and Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma philosophical and doctrinal discussions before and after the two traditions were finalized.[50]

[48] "Katamo hetu paccayo? Lobho hetupaccayo. Doso, moho, alobho, adoso, amoho hetupaccayo"-Paṭṭhanuddesadīpanī (Ed.) Bimalendra Kumar, Sampurnand Sanskrit University, Varanasi, 2005, p. 1.

[49] 'Lobha sahajātā cittacetasikā dhammā ca rūpakalāpa dhammā ca dosasahajātā mohasahajātā alobhasahajātā adosasahajātā amohosahajātā cittacetasikā dhammā ca rūpakalāpa dhammā ca hetupaccayato uppanna hetupaccayuppanna dhammā-Ibid.

[50] Noa Ronkin, Early Buddhist Metaphysics:The Making of a philosophical tradition, Routledge Curzon, London & New York, First Published, 2005, p. 226.

The Philosophical Links between 'Anatta' to 'Vijñāna'

Ven. Dr. Medawachchiye Dhammajothi Thero
Senior Lecturer, Pāli and Buddhist Studies
University of Colombo

Introduction

There are plenty of Buddhist traditions throughout the world. The one of the main causes for the arising of these different sects is philosophic problems that these traditions faced time to time in the sāsanic history. This situation can be seen in the Buddha's time as well as in the later periods of 'sāsana'. In the Buddha's time the 'ātman' concept was the focal question that he faced. After the demise of the Buddha, about one hundred years later, sāsana got divided into two and subsequently into many sects or groups. At that time, the central question was that if everything is impermanent how could things exist? And how the same person obtains consequence of 'kamma' in the next life or lives? All the Buddhist traditions tried to find solution for this question. So, they came up with their own philosophic solutions and they were labeled according to their philosophic interpretations. The terms that they used to denotes their philosophic points are different from one another. But, all these terms have been introduced to answer the one main question, that is how things exist if they are subject to change? This is the main issue that is examined by this paper and an attempt made to find out whether there is any unifying factor among various interpretations put forward by different Buddhist traditions.

'Anatta' and Continuity

Early Buddhism faced the problem of 'ātman' equivalent of Pāli 'atta'. 'Ātman' was put forward by the Upanisadic thinkers. They considered 'ātman' is an entity having the specific qualities of firmness or stability (dhruva), permanency (nitya), eternality (śāśvata), indestructible. (avināśī) etc.[1]

Upanisadic thinkers identified this as a thumb long, physical substance that lies in all beings, transmigrates from life to life (aṅguṣṭhamātraṃ). It remains unharm at death, for it is separated from the body.[2] When a being dies the body remains and the 'ātman' leaves the body and enters into a new one. Thus, continues the process of existence. This, 'ātman' was the main philosophical teaching during the Buddha's time.

Buddhism sees this 'atta' concept as eternalism (sassata diṭṭhi). According to Buddhism etenalism is one extreme. Other extreme is anihilationism. Buddhism rejects these two extremes as both misrepresent reality.[3] To negate this 'atta' concept the term used by the Buddha is 'anatta', which means that there is no 'atta'. To denote that there is no 'atta' the Buddha analyzed empirical individual into five aggregates (pañcakkhandha). The Buddha using a very simple form of practical logic said:

---

1 *Kaṭhopani·ad*, 4.3.18, " na jāyate na mriyate vā vipaścin-nā yaṃ kutaścinnababhūva kaścit. Ajo nityaḥ śaśvatoyaṃ purā ṇo- na hanyate hanyamā ne satire".

2 *Kaṭhopani·ad*, 4.3.12.

3 *Saṃyuttanikā ya*, ii, p17. " Kaccā nagottasutta".

> *"Monks, this form is no –self, this form would not be subject to illness. Had it been so it would have been possible to command, may my form, be in this, may it not be otherwise and so on. But as the form is no-self, therefore, there is no way to get from to behave in the way one wants may it be like this: may it not be like this."*[4]

The same is repeated with regard to the other four aggregates namely, 'vedanā', 'saññā', 'saṅkhāra', and 'viññāṇa'. Five aggregates analysis of the individual is not the only analysis presented in the early suttas to bring out the true nature of phenomena, specially to demonstrate the absence of any thing that could be labeled the individual soul, the 'ātman' or 'pudgala-ātma'. There are four other such analysis. They are:

1. 'Nāma-rūpa' analysis – the analysis of the individual into name and form or mind and matter.
2. Six elements (dhātu) analysis. -That is the analysis of the individual into four primary elements namely, earth (paṭhavi), water(āpo), heat(tejo), wind(vāyao), space(ākāsa), and consciousness (viññāṇa).
3. Twelve bases or 'āyatanas'. -That is six sense organs and six sense subjects.
4. Eighteen elements. -This is constituted of the six sense faculties and six sense object consciousness arising dependent on the contact between the faculties and objects. For example eye-consciousness (cakkhu viññāṇa) ear-consciousness (sota-viññāṇa) etc.

These, along with the analysis into five aggregates, constitute the five types of analyses. Though these analyses are done for different purposes, one of the main objectives of these analyses is to bring into focus that there is no soul, a self in the individual. To uphold the no-soul theory early Buddhism implemented a very meaningful method. It is:

> *"O monks, how do you think: form is permanent or impermanent? Venerable sir, impermanent. If anything is impermanent is it satisfactory or unsatisfactory? Venerable sir, unsatisfactory. If anything is unsatisfactory and impermanent is it possible to it as 'I' 'my' 'soul of mine', venerable sir it is impossible."* [5]

This shows that the term 'anatta' in early Buddhism has been used to point out the individual selflessness. But when it was needed to denote the 'anatta' with regard to the world the term 'suñña' was used in early Buddhism. For instance, Mogharājasutta of the *Suttanipāta* very clearly explains the world's 'anatta' using the term 'suñña'. The Mogharāja asks the Buddha: *"....him that looks the world in which manner, does the king of death not see?* The Buddha replies: "*Mogharāja, being ever mindful, look upon the world as void having rooted out the dogmatic view of the self-thus one would cross over death; him that looks upon the world in this manner, does the king of death not see*."[6] This is a purposeful use of the word 'suñña' to convey the idea that there is no substance in anything that is in the world. The world is devoid of any kind of an entity. In the same meaning the term 'suñña' has been used by the Buddha as reply to Ven. Ānanda's question. Once Ven. Ānanda

---

[4] *Vinaya,* 1. P 13.

[5] *Vinaya,* 1, p 14, "taṃ kimaññatha bhikkhave, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā ti?. Aniccaṃ bhante. Yampanā niccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ vā sukhaṃ vā ti?. dukkhaṃ bhante. Yampanṇā niccaṃ dukkaṃ vipariṇā madhammaṃ, kallannu taṃ samanupassitu ṃ 'etaṃ mama', 'eso hamasmi', 'eso me attā 'ti'?, nohetaṃ bhante."

[6] *Suttanipā ta,* stanza, 1116. Mogharā ja asks : " kataṃ lokaṃ avekkhantaṃ maccurā jā na passati?". The Buddha replies : " suññatao lokaṃ avekkhassu Mogharā jā sadā sato-attā nu diṭṭhiṃ ūhacca evaṃ maccu taro siyā , evaṃ lokaṃ avekkhantaṃ maccurā jā na passati".

asked the Buddha: *"Venerable sir, it is said: empty is the world, empty is the world, in what way venerable sir is it said: empty is the world?"* The Buddha replied: *"It is Ānanda, because it is empty of self and what belongs to self that it is said; 'empty is the world"*[7]. This usage of 'suñña' is very clearly philosophic in meaning and brings out the most earliest feature of the early Buddhist world-view that there is nothing independent, discrete, self-existent, uncaused or permanent.

It is clear that these two terms 'anatta' and 'suñña' have been used in early Buddhism in two different contexts. Though these two terms are same in basic meaning of soullessness, their usage and emphases are quite different. The former emphasizes individual soullessness while the latter emphasizes the soullessness of the world. So, it is important to note that former is more specific while later is in more wider sense including all the things in the world. In other words the later conveys all phenomena. It is interesting to note that somewhere else the term 'anatta' has been used in the same wider sense. For instance in the Maggavagga of the *Dhammapada* mentions: "All dhammas are without soul" (sabbe dhammā anattā'ti).[8] Here, 'dhamma' means all phenomena. In this context, the term 'anatta' is not restricted into the individual, but it goes beyond it and sometime it includes all the phenomena.

When we consider the common usage of the term 'anatta' it is very clear that it is mostly used in the sense of individual soullessness. Such usage is due to the fact that in the Buddha's time the main problem was the individual soul or 'pudgala-ātma' concept. So, the Buddha used the term 'anatta', perhaps may be he thought that is the most suitable term for it.

The question that arose with the early Buddhist teachings of 'anatta' and 'suñña' is, if the individual and the world is devoid of a soul how could things continue to exist: how can 'kamma' and rebirth be explained? Who will bear the consequence of 'kamma' done in this life when it is matured in next life or lives? How will one obtains rebirth from this life to the next life? The reply provided by the early Buddhism is that 'kamma' and rebirth can be explained by the dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda). According to the dependent origination 'viññāṇa' transmigrates from one life to another. These basic teachings 'anatta' 'suñña' and 'paṭiccasamuppāda' etc., did not pose any obstruction to early followers in their attempt to understand reality. They very clearly perceived them and put an end to continuation of 'saṃsāra'.

'Anicca' Continuity and Dhamma Theory

About one hundred years after the demise of the Buddha this situation changed. Among the monks there arose different views regarding the operation of 'anicca' 'kamma' and rebirth. If everything is impermanent (anicca) and changeable, how 'kamma', rebirth and so on could operate? The main reason for this divergent views was the monks inclination towards logic and reasoning (takkapariyāhataṃ vīmaṃsānucaritaṃ). They disregarding experience depended on logic and reasoning, attempted to interpret fundamental teachings of early Buddhism. The Puggalavādins[9]

[7] *Saṃyuttanikā ya,* iv, p54. "Lokasutta".
Ven. Ānanda asks: "suñño loko suñño lokoti bhante vuccati, kittā vatā nu kho bhante suññolokoti uccati?" The Buddha replies: "yasmā ca Ānanda suññaṃ attena vā attanyea vā tasmā suññolokoti vuccati"

[8] *Dhammapada,* stanza 279, "Maggavagga" " sabbe dhammā anattā 'ti -yadā paññā ya passati, atha nibbindat dukkhe-esa maggo visuddhiyā "

[9] *Note: Original Sanskrit Texts of Pudgalavādins are disappeared. Their views and teachings are available in some*

perhaps, may be the first group who came forward with the concept of 'puggala' to find an answer for the question pertaining to the operation of 'anicca', 'kamma' and birth. They maintained that it is the 'pudgala' (a person) who is the carrier of aggregates and who bears consequence of 'kamma', memory and so on throughout the 'saṃsāra'. They said the connection between 'pudgala' and five aggregates is like fuel and fire.[10] They pointed out that the fire reside neither outside of the fuel nor within it. In the same manner 'pudgala' is neither the same nor different from the five-aggregates. These Pudgalavādins strove to prove their new concept giving reference to the early suttas. They cited references where the Buddha preached about 'pudgala' and five aggregates. For instance in Bhārahārasutta of the *Saṃyuttanikāya,* there is reference to the 'burden' and 'burden carrier'. The burden is five aggregates while the carrier is the person (pudgala) [11].

Responding to this new concept of 'pudgala' the other monks criticized their view saying that these Pudgalavādins are the 'heretics within the 'sāsana' (antascara tīrthaka) because they secretly entrenched the soul concept (atta) in the teaching with their 'pudgala' concept. Rejecting the Pudgalavādins' 'pudgala' concept the three groups of monks came up with the new concepts for answering the question of how 'anicca', 'kamma' and rebirth could be explained? They are Theravada Ābhidhammikas, Sarvāstivādins, and Sautrāntikas. Theravāda Ābhidhammikas analyzed the empirical individual and the world into four groups and named them as 'paramattha dhamma'.[12] By the term 'paramattha dhamma' the Ābhidhammikas meant that things cannot be further analyzed or these are represent the last level to which the individual and the world could be analyzed. In this interpretation the 'paramattha dhammas' were given more importance. As a result of this, later Theravada Ābhidhammikas admitted an entity or substance which is not dividable. [13] With this analysis of 'paramattha dhammas' they could easily reject the 'atta' concept (individual soul) as well as the 'pudgala' concept, but it made them to accept certain kind of individable elements, which formed individual and the world. Perhaps, this may be the what led the later Ābhidhammikas to posit the existence of pure elements. (suddha dhammā pavattanti).[14] This situation has been clearly explained by Prof: Y. Karunadasa as follows:

> *"In the Ābhidhammic exegesis this term paramattha is defined to mean that which has reached its highest (uttama), implying thereby that the dhammas are ultimate existents with no possibility of further reduction. Hence own-nature (sva-bhāva) came to be further defined as ultimate nature (paramattha-svabhāva)".* [15]

Sarvāstivādins came up with the concept of 'sva-bhāva' (self-nature). According to them dhammas have two characteristics as 'sva-bhāva' and 'kāritra'. They said that the changeable part of the dhammas is 'kāritra' while the unchangeable part (own-nature) of dhammas is persisting throughout the 'saṃsāra'. Sarvāstivādins emphasize the tri-temporal existence of the dhamma.

---

other Sanskrit and Pali texts such as Abhidharmakoṣa and Kathā vatthuppakaraṇa. Perhaps some of the Chinese and Tibetan translations of their original Sanskrit texts are preserved.

10 Dutt, N., (1978) *p185.*

11 *Saṃyuttanikā ya,* iii, p25, "Bhā rahā rasutta" "Katamoca bhikkhave bhā ro? Pañcupā dā nakkhandhā tissa vacanīyaṃ… katomoca bhikkhave bhā rahā ro? Pudgalaotissa vacanīyaṃ…"

12 Narada Thera, (1956) p6, " tattha vutthā bhidhammatthā -catudhā paramatthato,- cittaṃ cetasikaṃ rūpaṃ- nibbā namiti sabbathā ".

13 *Abhidhammatthasaṅgahā -Vibhāvinī-Tīkā ,* p 4, "paramo uttamo aviparito attho paramattho".

14 *Visuddhimagga.* p517, *" Kaṅkh*ā vitaranavisuddhiniddeso", " kammassakā rako natthi vipā kassa ca vedako- suddha dhammā pavattanti evetaṃ sammadassanaṃ"

15 Karunadasa, y., (1996), p19.

To substantiate this tri-temporal existence of dhamma they referred to the Bhaddekarattasutta of the *Majjhimanikāya*. Citing this sutta they said that the Buddha has very clearly mentioned the dhammas exist in all periods. The sutta says:

> "*The past should not be followed after, the future not desired. What is past is got rid of and the future has not come. But whoever has vision now here, now there, of a present thing. Knowing that it is immovable, unshakable, let him cultivate it. Swelter at the task this very day…"*[16] (*Middle Length Sayings*, p. 233)

Sautrāntikas[17] introduced the theory of 'one faculty' (eka-rasa- indriya). It is this faculty that goes from life to life with the seed of 'kamma', memory and so on. With this 'one faculty' concept Sautrāntikas found answers for the question of how dhammas exist though they are impermanent. These groups of monks tried to find answers for the question of how 'kamma' and rebirth operate within the frame of 'anicca'. As mentioned above the Theravāda Ābhidhammikas, Sarvāstivādins and Sautrāntikas rejecting the individual soul turned towards the substantial interpretations. With these interpretations they tried to explain how 'kamma' and rebirth come to an operation though they are impermanent. So, these interpretations came under one line which is known as the 'dhamma theory'.

Mahāyāna Interpretation of 'Dhamma Theory' and Continuity

This 'dhamma theory' was criticized by another group of monks as an entity, essence or a soul on dhammas. They thought that this is another kind of soul concept introduced into Buddhism. So, they compiled sutras against this and some important sutras of them were known as Prajñāpāramitāsūtras. Through these sutras they pointed out that there is no soul in dhammas. As mentioned above it is clear that in the Buddha's time the main philosophical question was the existence of individual soul, but in the period of Prajñāpāramitāsūtras compilation the main philosophical problem was substance of dhammas (dharmātma). So, these sutras highly focused to emphasize the absence of substance in dhammas (dharmanairātmya). Traditionally it is understood that the main difference between traditional Buddhism and Mahāyāna is that the former lays more emphasis on the individual soul while the later emphasizes the absence of substance in dhammas. To denotes this view the term used in Mahāyāna texts is 'śūnya' or 'śūnyatā'. For instance, in A·ṭasā hasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtras it is explained as *"Monks, the form is void"* (rūpaṃ bhikkhave śūnyaṃ). These Prajñāpāramitāsūtras lays more emphasis on 'śūnya' and perhaps it caused misunderstanding of 'śūnya' as nothingness.

This misunderstanding can be clearly seen when Prajñāpāramitāsūtras were translated into Chinese. In these Chinese translations the term 'běn wu' which means originally non-existence or really non-existence was used for the term 'śūnya'. So, Chinese scholars misinterpreted 'śūnya' as non-existence or in other wards nothingness.[18] By the time of Nāgārjuna, who was the founder of Madhyamaka philosophy, there were two main problems, they are (i). the 'dhamma theory' and (ii). misunderstanding of 'śūnya' as nihilism.

---

[16] *Majjhimanikā ya,* III, p187, " atītaṃ nanvā gameyya- nappatikaṅkhe anā gataṃ -Yadatītaṃ pahnaṃ taṃ -appattaṃ ca anā gataṃ-Paccuppanañca yo dhammaṃ- tattha tattha vipassati- asamhīraṃ asaṃkuppaṃ taṃ vidvā manubrhaye".

[17] Note: Sautrā ntika's Original Texts are also not available it is said that they are preserved as Chinese and Tibetan translations

[18] .Dhammajothi, M., (2010) pp 73-76,

Madhyamaka Śūnyatā

Nāgārjuna, writing his magnum opus, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,* explained the concept of 'śūnya' in more logical and philosophical manner. The main aim of his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is to negate the 'dhamma theory'. As discussed above there were three main such groups namely Theravādains, Sarvāstivādins and Sautrāntikas whose teachings more favored a substantial view. But, in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* references in only to 'sva-bhāva theory' of Sarvāstivādins and makes no references to the other theories. Nāgārjuna very cleverly rejecting the 'sva-bhāva' teaching in his book, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* highlights the void of dhammas, using the term 'śūnyatā'. Scholars such as T.R.V. Murti holds the view that this 'śūnyatā' concept is a new innovation of later Mahāyāna Buddhism specially the great master Nāgārjuna and it was quite unknown to the early Buddhism. He compares it to the Copernican revolution and indirectly says that whole early Buddhism was turned upside down by this new approach[19]. Stcherbatsky also holds a view similar to that of Murti and he said that the term 'śūnyatā' is an innovation of Māhāyana, an innovation made necessary by the course of philosophic development. Professor W.S. Karunaratne has clearly pointed out the early Buddhism was quite aware of the 'śūnyatā'. The Professor said: "*Stherbatskey's statement that the term śūnyatā is an innovation of the Mahayana is remarkable for the ignorance it betrays of the facts of early Buddhism. The literal and philosophical senses of this terms are already clearly attested in Pāli texts…*"[20] The question that should be examined is why Māhāyana Prajñāpāramitāsūtras and Nāgārjuna chose the term 'śūnya' instead of 'anatta'. As explained at the beginning, in early Buddhism, 'anatta' was used more frequently to denote the soullessness of individual, while 'suñña' was used to show the absence of substance in the world. Since, the philosophic question by the time of Prajñāpāramitāsūtras and Nāgārjuna was as seen by the popularity of the 'sva-bhāva theory' of Sarvastivādins. Prajñāpāramitāsūtras and Nāgārjuna preferred to use the term 'śūnya' to negate the 'atta' or substance in dhammas as well as individual soul. It is known as 'dharmanairātmyatā'.

In response to the view of misinterpretation of 'śūnyatā' as nihilism, Nāgārjuna said that 'śūnyatā' is not a nihilism[21]. This idea was brought to China with the translation of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhymakakārikā* and his other books by Kumārajīva. Kumārajīva introduced a new term 'xing kong' which means 'sva-bhāva śūnyatā' instead of the previous term 'běn wu' which means really or originally things do not exist. So, the Chinese interpretation of 'śūnyatā' got corrected.

When 'atta' was negated the question arose in early Buddhism as to how 'kamma' and 'punabbhava' exist. In the same way, when the 'sva-bhāva' or substance of dhammas was rejected, the same question arose. So, the answer given was the same by Nāgārjuna, and he compared 'śūnyata' with pratītyasmutpāda. Nāgārjuna said *"whatever that is dependent arising we say that is emptiness."*[22] Furthermore, Nāgārjuna very clearly explains his 'śūnyatā' giving reference to Kaccānasutta of *Saṃyuttanikāya* preached by the Buddha to the master Kacācna. Nāgārjuna said*: "according to the instruction to Kaccāna, the two views of the world in terms of being and non-being were criticized by the Buddha, for similarly admitting the bifurcation of entities into existence and non-existence."*

---

19 Murti, T. R. V., (1955) p 123.

20 Karunaratna, W. S., (1988) p 169-170

21 Mūlamadhyamakakā rikā , chapter, 17,stanza , 20. "Śūnyatā ca na cocchedaḥ –saṃsā raśca na śā vataṃ"

22 *Mūlamadhyamakakā rikā ,* chapter, 24, stanza, 18. "Yaḥ pratītya samutpā daḥ śūnyatā ṃ tā ṃ pracak·mahe- sā prajñaptirupā dā ya pratipasaiva madhyamā ".

Through the dependent origination Nāgārjuna explains interdependence of things and reveals the voidness of things. According to Nāgārjuna things have no independent existence so, things are interrelated. As things are interrelated they are void. Hence, it is very clear that Nāgārjuna proclaims voidness of the things through their interdependence. He said: "*saṃsāra is nothing essentially different from nirvāṇa. Nirvāṇa is nothing essentially from saṃsāra*" [23]

Yogācāra Vijñānavāda

Another sectarian of Māhāyana tradition was represented by Yogācārins who came up with the theory of 'Vijñāna' as the solution to the problem of how 'anicca' 'kamma' and 'punabbhava' could be explained without 'atta'. When Yogācārins studied the reply for this, they found that the 'śūnyata' concept has been cause for misunderstanding of Buddhism as nihilism. Though Nāgārjuna very clearly emphasized 'śūnyatā' is not a nihilism, its etymological meaning was rather suggestive of nihilism. So, 'śūnyatā' was misunderstood as nihilism. Because of this misunderstanding of 'śūnyatā' put forward by the Madhyamaka, Buddhist philosophy turned towards negativism.

This situation is seen by Yogācārins and they thought this is not the real teaching of the Buddha. So, with the 'vijñāna' concept they preferred to find a more positive answers for the aforesaid question. They divided 'vijñāna' into three aspects (i). 'Pravṛti vijñāna'(saḍindriyavijñāna). (ii). 'Manana vijñāna', and (iii). 'Ālaya vijñāna'. 'Manana vijñāna' is the nature of 'vijñāna' in which is deeply rooted the feeling of myself. This 'manana vijñāna' is made by 'ālayavijñāna' to connect it with 'pravṛti 'vijñāna' or 'saḍindriya vijñāna'. 'ālayavijñāna' is the aspect of consequences that bears aspect of consciousness that all seeds of 'kamma', memory, and so on, transmigrating throughout the 'saṃsāra'. In that sense it is called 'sarvabījaka', which means store-conciseness. Laṅkāvatārasūtra explains that 'ālayavijñāna' is like the sea while 'pravṛti vijñāna' is like the sea waves.[24] This simile reveals the importance of 'ālayavijñāna' when one experiences phenomena. As all the waves are created based on the sea, all the mental and physical experience are based on the 'ālayavijñāna'. Yogācārins emphasized more the function of the 'vijñāna' when one experiences the world.

Prof: Kalupahana is of the view that misinterpretation of Yogācārins occurred at the hands of Chinese translators when they translated Vasubandu's *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* into Chinese. The Chinese translators have given it a more viññānic sense.[25] These Chinese translators mistranslated the term ' vijñaptimātra' (wei liao bie) of Vasubandhu as ' vijñanamātra' (wei shi) into Chinese language. Vasubandhu's 'vijñaptimātra' means 'ideation only'. But Chinese translators not only mistranslated it as 'vijñanamātra' but also misinterpreted it as an idealism which negates the existence of the things. Later on when Sylvan Levi translated the Chinese *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* into English, he followed the same meaning and this tradition came to be considered as 'Vijñānavāda'**.**

[23] Mūlamadhyamakakā rikā , chapter 15, stanza, 7. " Katyā yana vā de cā stīti nā stīti cobhayaṃ-Pratisiddhaṃ bhagavatā -bhā vabhā vavibhā vinā ".

[24] Mūlamadhyamakakā rikā, chapter, 25, stanza 20.
" nirvā ṇasya ca yā kotiḥ –saṃsā rasya ca- Na taoyrantaraṃ – kiñcitsusūk•amamapi vidyate"

[25] Laṅkā vatā rasūtra, Sloka, 100.

So, why the Chinese translators used the term 'vijñanamātra' (wei shi) for 'vijñaptimātra' (wei liao bie)' is an open question to investigate by scholars.[26]

This Vasubandhu's view of 'vijñaptimātra' can be compared with the Madhyamaka 'śūnyatā' concept. As mentioned above Nāgārjuna sees 'śūnyatā' through interdependence and interrelatedness of the things. According to him there is no-thing in the absolute sense which can be taken as an essence or substance of the dhammas. In the same manner Vasubandhu sees everything in the world as a ideation only ('vijñaptimātra'). That knowledge is called 'parikalpita'[27]. Yogācārins say that the second step of knowledge is 'paratantra'. It is a knowledge which arise through the understanding of interrelatedness of the things. This 'paratantra' knowledge is based on 'vijñāna'. In explaining this they pointed out why the same young girl is viewed by a young man, a tiger and an arhant differently. A young girl for a young man is a sensual object, while for a tiger she is food. At the same time she only is a heap of five aggregates for an arhant. So, the same object, is being viewed by different persons in different manner because they perceive it according to their seeds of 'vijñāna'. Therefore, the empirical world is decided by the 'vijñāna'. In that sense empirical world is only an ideation created by 'vijñāna'. It does not mean that the empirical world does not exist. Nāgārjuna's 'śūnyatā' also does not mean the empirical world is not existing, he meant only the absence of the entity of the empirical world. So, philosophically both these teachers pointed out the same meaning, but in different terms. Nāgārjuna used the term 'śūnya', while Vasubandhu used the term 'vijñaptimātra'. Nāgārjuna said 'śūnyaṃ idaṃ' and Vasubandhu said 'vijñaptimātraṃevetad'[28]

Conclusion

Above discussed facts show the evolution of Buddhist philosophy from 'anatta' to 'vijñāna' and how different Buddhist sects tried to find answer for the one central question, that is how can 'anicca', 'kamma' and 'punabbhava' be explained without the 'ātma' concept. Though the Buddhist scholars approached in varied the focal question is same. For instance early Buddhism wanted to deny the individual 'atta' concept, while sectarian groups tried to explain how things exist though they are impermanent. They introduced many philosophical concepts but they were labeled as substantialists. To rescue Buddhism from this substantial approach Māhāyana scholars brought two new theories such as 'śūnya' and 'vijñāna'. So, it is critical that all these Buddhist traditions tried to explain the existence of 'kamma' 'punabbhava' memory and so on more closely to the early Buddhism. In doing this these sects depended on logic, reasoning and language, while early Buddhism used sensory perception aided by extra-sensory perception. Thus, these Buddhist sects innovated different views, though their aim is the same.

[26] Kalupahana, D. J., (1976) p 189-190. (see Ven. Dhammajothi's article "Mind Only or Ideation Only: An Examination of Yogā cā ra Philosophy and Its Chinese Interpretation"

[27] Triṃśatikā, 23 sloka, "Trividasya svabhā vasya-trividaṃ niḥsvabhā vataṃ-Saṃdhā ya sarvadharmā nā ṃ-deśitā niḥsvabhā vatā "

[28] Kalupahana, D.J., (1987) p 134.

Bibliography

Primary Sources: Books

Abhidhammatthasaṅgahā-Vibhāvinī-Tīkā, (Colombo: W. Paññānanda edition) 1899.

Dhammapada, trans, by Ven. Narada, (Taiwan: The Cooperate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation) 1993, 4th edition.

Kaṭhopani·ad, (Colombo: Sumanalal Kakulawala Edition) 1961.

Laṅkāvatārasūtra, edited, by P. L. Vaidya, (Mitila : Postgraduate Research Institute)1967.

Majjhimanikāya, III, (England: Pāli Texts Society) 1994,

Middle Length Sayings, trans, by I. B. Horner, (England: Pāli Texts Society) 1959.

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, trans, by Keneth K Inada, (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publication) 1993.

Saṃyuttanikāya, ii, (England : Pāli Texts Society) 2000.

Saṃyuttanikāya, iii, (England: Pāli Texts Society, England) 2001.

Saṃyuttanikāya, iv, (England: Pāli Texts Society) 2001.

Suttanipāta, trans, by Jayawickama N. A., (Kelaniya: Post-Graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies) 2001.

Thirteen Principal of Upanisads, trans, by Robert Ernest Hume, (UK: Oxford University Press)

Triṃśatikā, trans, by Kalupahana D. J., *Principles of Buddhist Psychology*, (New York: State University) Appendix, II. (1987).

Vinaya, 1. (England: Pāli Texts Society) 1997.

Visuddhimagga, edited by Henry Clark Warren, and Dhammananda Kosambhi, (Delhi: Motilal Banarisidass) 1999.

Secondary Sources: Books

Dutt, N., (1978) *Buddhist Sects in India,* (Delhi: Motilal Banarisidass).

Kalupahana, D. J., (1976) *History of Buddhist Philosophy*, (Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii)

Kalupahana, D.J., (1987) *Principles of Buddhist Psychology,* (New York: State University).

Karunadasa, Y., (1996) *The Dhamma Theory*, (Kandy: The Wheel Publication No 412/413, Buddhist Publication Society).

Karunaratna, W. S., (1988) *The Theory of Causality*, (Nugegoda: Indumati Karunaratne) Thesis presented to the London University, SOAS in 1956, unprinted till 1988

Murti, T. R. V., (1955) *Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: George Allan and Unwin)

Narada Thera, (1956) *A Manual of Abhidhamma, Abhidhammatthasaṅgahā,* (Vajiraramaya: Colombo)

Articles

Dhammajothi, M., (2010) "Śūnyatā Doctrine of Nāgārjuna as seen by Master Shen Zhao", *Buddhism Contemporary Studies*, *Selected Papers 3rd International Conference,* (Colombo: Sri Lanka Association for Buddhist Studies) (SLAB).

Dhammajothi, M., (2011) "Mind Only or Ideation Only: An Examination of Yogācāra Philosophy and Its Chinese Interpretation" This article is given to publish *the Journal of Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy* (SIBA), (Kandy: SIBA).

Nature Of Citta, Mano And Viññāṅa

Ven.Dr. Thich Nhat Tu
Deputy Rector, Vietnam Buddhist University,
HCM, Vietnam

Introduction:

In Buddhism, there are at least four technical terms designating the concept of mind or consciousness in western psychology. They are *nāma, mano, citta* and *viññāṇa*. *Nāma* as always in the compound "*nāmarūpa*" represents the whole psychological aspect of human personality, as being different and mutually dependent on the physical part or non-conscious personality factor (*rūpa*). In so far as *citta, mano* and *viññāṇa* as "non-physical or conscious aggregate" designating both the conscious and subconscious parts of mentality of sentient beings, having the characteristic of cognizing objects, in contrast with the physical body (*cātummahābhūtika kāya*), they are interchangeably used as synonym.[1] These terms are often confusingly translated into English as "mind," by non-Buddhist thinkers. The English "mind" does not convey adequately the connotation of the Pali *citta, mano* and *viññāṇa*.[2] Philosophically, in specific textual contexts, there is a variety of meanings among them indicating distinct psychological functions of human mentation. D. J. Kalupahana notes that in a limited or specific sense, *viññāṇa* refers to ego-consciousness, *citta* to thinking and *mano* to the faculty of the mind.[3] This contention needs explanation. So far as the *viññāṇa* is concerned, it is *mano-viññāṇa* not the first five *viññāṇas* that has the tendency of I-making. Ego-consciousness is therefore confined to this mental consciousness only. According to W. S. Karunaratna,[4] *citta* represents the subjective aspect of consciousness, *mano* the rational faculty playing intellectual functioning of consciousness, while *viññāṇa* the field of sense and sense-reaction - the sphere of sensory and perceptive activity. With reference to the *Wei-shì-luøn-zheøng-i* (唯 識 論 證 義), a commentary treatise of Yogācāra Buddhism, which admits two more consciousnesses, namely, I-making consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas* C. 末 那 識) and store-house consciousness (*alāya-vijñāna* C. 阿 賴 耶 識), W. M. McGovern[5] notes that the Yogācārins take *alāya-vijñāna* the title *citta,* whereas the seventh consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas*), the same *manas* and the first six sensory consciousnesses, the same *vijñāna.* Thus, to Yogācārins only *alāya-vijñāna* is interchangeably used as same as the *citta.* In the Pali Abhidhamma Buddhism, a similar position "*viññāṇa* as *citta*" or "*cittas* as *viññāṇa*" is also seen, as the Abhidhamma authors group the 89 or 121 kinds of *citta,* which is one of the four ultimate realities (*catudhā paramattha*),[6] under the category of consciousness-personality factors (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*).[7] However, the concept of *alāya-vijñāna* is

---

1 *S.* II. 94: "But this, brethren, that we call thought, that we call mind, that we call consciousness" *Yañ ca kho etaṁ bhikkhave vuccati cittam iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇam iti pi.* Translation by Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids. *KS.* II. 66.

2 Piyadassi (1972): 11.

3 *EB*. s.v. *consciousness*: IV. 235a.

4 *EB*. s.v. *citta*: IV. 169b.

5 W. M. McGovern (1979): 135.

6 The other three being mental factors (*cetasika*), matter (*rūpa*) and *nibbāna*.

7 A good example of this can be seen at Bhikkhu Bodhi (1989): 25ff.; 288.

comparable with the concept of *bhavaṅga-citta/viññāṇa* of later Abhidhamma philosophy.[8] Coming to the point, another aspect differentiating them from one another is that *mano* attaches to the feeling of I, seeking cravings for sensuality (*kāmataṇhā*), for existence (*bhavataṇha*) and for non-existence (*vibhavataṇha*); viññāṇa engages more in activities responsible for continual existence of beings in process of rebirth (*saṁsāra*), while *citta* designated for mental training leading to the realization of *nibbāna*. Accordingly, *citta, mano* and *viññāṇa* may be best rendered into English as "mind" (C. *xīn,* 心), "mentation" or "ideation" (C. *ī,* 意) and "consciousness" (C. *shì,* 識) respectively.[9] They three terms are closely related but playing different functions. *Citta* has an experiential function, m*ano,* as an "inner sense"[10] in Johansson's wording, has an instrumental function while *viññāṇa* sensory function. The following is an attempt to differentiate their function in Buddhist ethico-psychological analysis.

NATURE OF *MANO*

Mano is often translated into English "mind." It would be a mistake to render *mano* as "the grey matter of the brain,"[11] because this rendering ignores the other important function of *mano* as internal sense also, as we shall see later that it plays a double function, as both internal and external senses. In Buddhist psychology, *mano* is described as a state of consciousness playing the function of ideation (*manosaṅkhāra*) and thinking (*manovitakkā*).[12] It extends to cover mental activities such as judging, evaluating and calculating of object. As a sense organ, both internal and external, *mano* is "partly physiological (as one of the sense organ) and partly ideational (as one integrator of the perceptual process)."[13] Its most special function is, therefore, to receive sensations and impressions from the other five sense organs, a function, which is neither shared nor possessed by any of the latter. It acts as the co-ordinator of the other five senses: "Of the five senses, different in range, different in field, not reacting to the field and range of each other, *mano* is the refuge, and *mano* resonates to their field and range."[14] Its scope of functioning includes in the first five sense organs and the six sense-data or objects.[15] It, therefore, becomes a great source constituting human experience and knowledge. However, having concepts, ideas, mental images (*dhammā*) as its object, *mano* is described as reflective faculty making conceptualization. In this process, it may become the source or the condition, producing the feeling of self/soul/I (*atta // ātman*) or, to some extent, giving rise to the false belief in an unchangeable personal identity or a permanently substantial self. Such a substantial feeling or belief is great deal of suffering for human beings, leading to harmful consequences. According to the Buddha, as a condition for consciousness, *mano* and its fellow-faculties are, as dependently arisen, impermanent and changing.[16]

8 See ¤ 4.6.3 below for a brief discussion on *Viññāṇa*.

9 Cf. *KS.* II. 66; D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 31: they are rendered as thought (*citta*), mind (*mano*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). W. M. McGovern renders them as mind, reason and consciousness, respectively (1979): 131.

10 R.E.A. Johansson (1985): 205?

11 See for instance, R. G. Wettimuny (1969): 167.

12 *S.* I. 207.

13 B. Matthews (1983): 41.

14 *S.* V. 218: *Imesaṁ kho… pañcannaṁ indriyānaṁ nānāvisayānaṁ nānāgocarānaṁ na aññamaññassa gocaravisayaṁ paccanubhontānaṃ mano paṭisaraṇaṃ, mano ca nesaṃ gocaravisayaṃ paccanubhotīti.* Translation by B. Matthews (1983): 39-40. For different translations, see *KS.* V. 193 and A. Tilakaratne (1993): 49.

15 See diagram ① above.

16 For further see D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 29-31.

NATURE OF *CITTA* (MIND/THOUGHT)

Translation, Definition and Function. In Buddhist psychology, *citta* as a generic term is rendered variously by scholars to mean mind, thought, heart, conception, consciousness, mood, emotion, spirit, idea and attitude.[17] Buddhadatta[18] renders it as both "mind" and "thought." Rhys Davids and William Stede favour the rendering "heart" (psychologically) and "thought" (rationally).[19] According to W. M. McGovern *citta* is the standard term for the whole of the subjective life, as opposed to *rūpa, caitasikas,* and in some ways, corresponding to the English soul, heart or spirit when these terms are de-ātmanized.[20] The word *citta* is, in fact, derived from the verbal root "*citi*" meaning to cognize or to know something as its object. It is defined in three ways: as an agent, as an instrument and as an activity. As the agent, *citta* is that which cognizes an object (*ārammaṇaṁ cintetī ti cittaṁ*), whether internal or external. As an instrument, *citta* is that by means of which the accompanying mental factors (*cetasika*) cognize the object (*etena cintentī ti cittaṁ*). As an activity, *citta* is itself nothing other than the process of cognizing the object (*cintanamattaṁ cittaṁ*).[21] Citta is non-material lying in the cave of heart (*guhāsaya / hadayavatthu*).[22] *Citta* is the seat and organ or center or focus of man's thought (*cetasa citeti*). Its most primary function is to think (*cinteti*) of object of every kind. In relation to its objects, it applies to, holds up and takes up (*paggaṇhāti*);[23] it also directs, applies and bends (*namati*).[24] It comes forth, brings to the ground and rejoices in object.[25] It brings together, disposes, arranges, focuses, concentrates and collects (*upasaṁharati*) the object.[26] As a director of human thinking, *citta* plays an important role in performing actions, whether moral, emotional, rational or intellectual. *Citta* is the refuge (*paṭisarana*)[27] upon which the two mental properties - feeling or affective (*vedanā*) and perception or ideation (*saññā*) - depend.[28] Feeling is hedonic tone of the *citta* while perception is the rational concerned with knowing and reasoning. In other words, the function of *citta* is of twofold, viz., negative and positive. As regards negative function, *citta* feeling attach to, is inclined towards and indulges (*adhimuccati*)[29] in pleasure of senses. Due to its clinging to (*sajjati*) and getting bound up (*gayhati*) with its sensory objects,[30] *citta* is defiled and corrupt (*vyāsiñcati*),[31] by hedonic tendencies, such as greed (*lobha*), ill-will (*dosa*), ignorance (*moha*), shamelessness (*anottappa*), lack of moral conscience (*ahirika*), etc. Such a negative tendency is conductive to the rebirth in *saṁsāra.* As far as its positive function is concerned, *citta* can lead one to truth (*tathattāya upaneti*)[32] by its ethically positive qualities, such as powers of rational faith (*saddhā*), mindfulness (*sati*), conscience (*hiri*), moral shame (*ottappa*), non-greed (*alobha*), non-ill-will (*adosa*), equanimity (*tatramajjhattatā*), etc. This anti-

---

[17] *EB*. s.v. *citta*: IV. 169b.
[18] *CPED*. s.v. *citta*: 98.
[19] *PED*. s.v. *citta*: 266.
[20] W. M. McGovern (1979): 132.
[21] Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993): 27.
[22] *Dhs*. 37.
[23] *S.* V. 9.
[24] *S.* I. 137.
[25] *S.* I. 98: *cittaṃ pakkhandati, pasīdati, santiṭṭhati.*
[26] *S.* V. 213ff.
[27] *S.* V. 218.
[28] *S.* IV. 293: *Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittapa ibaddhā.*
[29] *S.* V. 409f.
[30] *S.* II. 198.
[31] *S.* IV. 178.
[32] *S.* IV. 294.

hedonic tendency leads to realization of *nibbāna*. Thus *citta* becomes the most prominent role in the world of activities and becoming: "Well, monks, the world is led by mind, and drawn away by mind. The world comes under the power of mind."[33]

NATURE OF *CITTA*

As a series of mental process, mind is constantly in a flow of flux. Its mentation in constant flux is recorded in different ways. It is trembling (*phandanaṁ*) and wavering (*capalaṁ*).[34] It travels far and moves about alone (*ekacara*).[35] *Citta* is the only psychic center responsible for performing human ethical behaviour (*kamma*), whether good (*kusala*), evil (*akusala*) and neutral (*avyākṛtatva/ āneñjā*). It is the conscious factor carrying the traces both of purposiveness (*cetanā*) of moral actions (*kamma*) and its experience (*vipāka*). It is the stream of emotionality and intellectuality of human being. Standing for the consciousness-personality factors (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*), as opposed to matter-personality factors (*rūpakkhandha*), *citta* is the conscious stream of non-substantial continuity storing all man's karmic heritage (*bīja* / vā*sanā*) transmitted through the cycle of lives (*saṁsāra*). Due to moral and intellectual vices or defilements (*lobha, dosa, moha*), *citta* continuously involves in *saṁsāra*. By cultivating moral (*sīla*) and intellectual (*paññā*) virtues, *citta* frees from bondage of misery (*dukkha*) leading to enlightenment (*sambodhi*) and liberation (*nibbāna*). In accordance with the law of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), *citta* is causally and dependently arisen on an object (*ārammaṇa*), or on the coming together (*saṅgati/contact*) of mentation (*mano*) and (*dhamma*). Its object can be a color (*rūpa*), sound (*sadda*), smell (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*), something tangible (*phoṭṭhabba*) and mental object such as ideas or concepts (*dhammā*). It is, therefore, neither permanent, nor substantial ego-entity (*akārakabhāvaṃ*). It is not the substantial agent that thinks, that speaks, that feels, or that experiences,[36] but only a series of awareness (*vijānanamattadīpanato*). In other words, it is merely instrumental and functional in nature.

Classification of Mind.

In the Pali Buddhism,[37] *citta* representing the whole consciousness-personality factors (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*), can be classified by different principles, namely, plane of existence, nature (*jāti*), root (*hetu*) and feeling (*vedanā*), etc.

With respect to plane of existence, *citta* can be broadly divided into four categories, viz., *citta* associated with the sensuous world (*Kāmāvacara-citta*), with the world of form (*Rūpāvacara-citta*), with the formless world (*Arūpāvacara-citta*) and with the transcendental (*Lokuttara-citta*). The number of *citta* is plentifully recorded as 89 or 121, according different classifications. They are: (1) 54 *citta* of the sensuous sphere (*kāmāvacara-citta*), (2) *citta* of the form

33 *A*. II. 171: *Cittena kho bhikhave loko niyyati, cittena parikassati, cittassa uppannassa vasam gacchati.*
34 *Dhp*. 33.
35 *Dhp*. 37.
36 *M*. I. 256. Cf. *S*. II. 13: "I [the Buddha] do not speak of anyone who touches (*phusatīti ahaṃ na vadāmi*). I do not speak anyone who feels (*vediyatīti ahaṃ na vadāmi*);" *M*. I. 293; *Vism*. 460.
37 For example, the *Dhammasaṅganī* of Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* of Anuruddha, *Atthasālinī* of Buddhaghosa, the *Abhidhammattha-vibhāvinī* of Buddhadatta, etc. For a good exposition of various kinds of *citta*, see Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993): 27-73.

sphere (*rūpavacara-citta*), (3) 12 *citta* of the formless sphere (*arūpavacarakusala-citta*), and (4) transcendental *citta,* making 89 kinds of *citta.* Another classification further divides 8 transcendental *citta* of class (4) into 40, making 121 *citta* in total.

Cittas can also be divided in accordance to their properties in relation to the Mundane and the Supra-mundane. There are (1) 12 immoral minds (*akusala-citta*), (2) 21 moral minds (*kusala-citta*), (3) 36 resultant minds (*vipāka-citta*) and (4) 20 functional minds (*kiriyā-citta*), making 89 minds. This classification is further divided in to 121 by adding 16 to class (2) and 16 to class (3).

In terms of moral nature (*jāti*), *citta* can be classified into four categories, viz., wholesome (*kusala*), unwholesome (*akusala*), resultant (*vipāka*) and functional (*kiriyā*). Wholesome mind (*kusalacitta*) is that which is accompanied with unwholesome roots, namely, greed, ill-will and delusion. Unwholesome mind (*akusalacitta*) is that which is accompanied with three wholesome roots, namely, non-greed, non-ill-will and non-delusion. The third class of *cittas* is that which comprises both the results of wholesome and unwholesome actions (*kamma*). Its results are other *cittas* experiencing karmic maturation. Functional mind (*kiriyācitta*) is neither action (*kamma*) nor resultant (*vipāka*). It is a kind of transcendental activity of Arahant, producing no further karmic result in *saṁsāra*. Resultant mind (*vipākacitta*) and functional mind (*kiriyācitta*) are again classified under the category "indeterminate" (*abyākata*), which is neither wholesome nor unwholesome.

Cittas are also classified in association with roots (*hetu/mūla*). While *citta* associated with roots, it is called *sahetuka cittas*, *citta* dissociated from roots, it is called *ahetuka citta.* These are rooted and rootless states of *citta* respectively. There are six roots, ethically, three wholesome (*kusala*) and the other three unwholesome (*akusala*). The three unwholesome are greed (*moha*), ill-will (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). The three wholesome roots are greedlessness (*alobha*), hatelessness (*adosa*) and undeludedness (*amoha*). The former three manifests negative aspects of mentation, while the latter three manifesting as generosity and renunciation, loving kindness and wisdom or understanding, respectively.

Cittas are also categorized according different kinds of feeling (*vedanā*). In association with feeling (*vedanā*), *citta* differs from one another. Some *citta* accompanied by a pleasant feeling (*sukha vedanā*) is known as pleasant *citta,* by an unpleasant feeling (*dukkhā vedanā*) as unpleasant *citta*, and by a neutral feeling (*upekkhāvedanā*) as indifferent *citta.* Feeling is in fact a reaction, either acceptance (pleasure), rejection (displeasure) and indifference (neither pleasure nor displeasure). Pleasant feeling has the tendency to develop attachment leading to suffering, while unpleasant feeling to aversion leading to another kind of suffering also. With regard to indifferent feeling, there are of two kinds. The first kind is heartless indifference, a total disregard for one's own ad other's well-being, while the other, equanimity, an attitude of mental calmness amidst the vicissitudes of life. The former as rooted in unwholesome roots should be abandoned, whereas the latter as born of wisdom should be cultivated.

NATURE OF *VIÑÑĀṆA*

Translation and Definition: As noted above, most of scholars translate *viññāṇa* as "consciousness." There are, however, several English translations of the term.

Table 3: 81 and 121 *Cittas* Classified according to Their Properties, in Relation to Fourfold Sphere

81 MUNDANE *CITTAS*		**SENSUOUS SPHERE *CITTAS***	**54**
	(1-12)	Unwholesome *Citta*s	12
	(1-8)	*Cittas* rooted in greed	8
	(9-10)	*Cittas* rooted in ill-will	2
	(11-12)	*Cittas* rooted in ignorance	2
	(13-30)	Rootless *Cittas*	18
	(13-19)	Unwholesome resultant	7
	(20-27)	Wholesome resultant	8
	(28-30)	Rootless functional	3
	(31-54)	Sensuous Sphere Wholesome *Cittas*	24
	(31-38)	Sensuous sphere wholesome	8
	(39-46)	Sensuous sphere resultant	8
	(47-54)	Sensuous sphere functional	8
	(55-69)	**FORM SPHERE *CITTAS***	**15**
	(55-59)	Form sphere wholesome	5
	(60-64)	Form sphere resultant	5
	(65-69)	Form sphere functional	5
	(70-81)	**FORMLESS SPHERE *CITTAS***	**12**
	(70-73)	Formless sphere wholesome	4
	(74-77)	Formless sphere unwholesome	4
	(78-81)	Formless sphere functional	4
8 or 40 TRANSCEN-DENTAL *CITTAS*	**(82-89 or 121)**	**TRANSCENDENTAL WHOLESOME *CITTAS***	**8 or 40**
	(82-85 or 101)	Transcendental Wholesome *Cittas*	4 or 20
	(82) or (82-86)	Path of stream-entry	1 or 5
	(83) or (87-91)	Path of once-returning	1 or 5
	(84) or (92-96)	Path of non-returning	1 or 5
	(85) or (97-101)	Path of Arahantship	1 or 5
	(86-89 or 121)	Transcendental Resultant *Cittas*	4 or 20
	(86) or (102-06)	Fruit of stream-entry	1 or 5
	(87) or (107-111)	Fruit of once-returning	1 or 5
	(88) or (112-116)	Fruit of non-returning	1 or 5
	(89) or (117-121)	Fruit of Arahantship	1 or 5

In her translation of the *Majjhima-nikāya*[38] I.B. Horner favors the rendering "discriminative consciousness." Some scholars render it as "discernment,"[39] "cognition"[40] and "awareness."[41]

Compared with *mano, viññāṇa* has a wider scope representing discernment, awareness and experience based upon all six faculties and their six objects. According to *PTS Pali-English Dictionary viññāṇa* is a mental quality as a constituent of individuality, the bearer of individual life, life-force as extending over rebirths, principle of conscious life, general consciousness as function of mind and matter, or regenerative force as transforming (according to individual kamma) one individual life (after death) into the next.[42] In other words, *viññāṇa* is a crucial factor of animate existence without which there would be no existence of individuality.[43] It is used to denote the sensory or experiencing models of perception and knowing of a sentient being. *Viññāṇa* in unsubstaintial sense is the receiver of or effected by moral retribution.[44] In the process of rebirth, as stated earlier, it is *viññāṇa*, or alterably *citta*, but not *mano*, is the only term exclusively mentioned.[45] It withdraws from the body at the time at death, and enters into the womb at the time of conception.[46]

Origin of consciousness: According to the Buddha, consciousness cannot emerge in the absence of conditions,[47] but it is rather dependently causal process (*paṭiccasamuppannaṁ viññāṇaṁ*). The dependently causal condition of consciousness is *nāma-rūpa.* This relation is expressed in the following manner: *nāmarūpa* is the ground, the basis, the genesis or the cause of contact (*phassa*),[48] and thus of consciousness. The canonical passage runs thus:

Ānanda, this is the reason, the root-cause, the origin and condition of consciousness, namely, name-and-form. In so far, Ānanda, can one be born, or grow old, or die, or fall from one existence, or arise again, in so far are there three ways of verbal explanation, verbal expression, verbal designation, in so far is there a realm of knowledge, in so far the round of existence runs its course for the manifestation [of an individual] in these conditions, in so far as name-and-form together with consciousness are active in reciprocally being the condition for becoming of one another.[49]

This is so because no consciousness would arise in absence of contact (*phassa/saṅgati*) between sense organs and sense data or objects. In a diverse manner, consciousness is the ground of *nāma-rūpa* as in the series of dependent origination: "in dependence on consciousness arise name-and-shape" (*viññānapaccayā nāmarūpam*).[50] In another Pali passage, the emergence of consciousness is expressed in the following manner:

[38] *MLS.* I. 351f.
[39] See, for instance, P. Harvey (1995): chs. 6-13.
[40] See e.g. *DB*. II. 60 ff.; *EB*. s.v. *dhātu (2)*: IV. 571b.
[41] See, for example, E. Conze (1962): 111.
[42] *PED*. s.v. *viññāṇa*: 618.
[43] *S.* III. 143; *M.* I. 296.
[44] *S.* II. 82: "If an ignorant man performs an ethicaly good deed, [his] consciousness will go to merit, and if he undertakes ethically evil deed, [consciousness] will go to demerit." (*avijjāgato yaṁ… purisapuggalo puññaṁ ce saṅkhāram abhisaṅkharoti, puññūpagaṁ hoti viññāṇaṁ; apuññaṁ ce saṅkhāram abhisaṅkharoti, apuññūpagaṃ hoti viññāṇaṁ*). This, however, does not mean consciousness as a self-subsistent entity that speaks, that feels, that experiences… which is denied by the Buddha at *M.* I. 258.
[45] Only in this case, *citta* and *viññāṇa* are functionally equivalent. See S. Collins (1982): 214.
[46] *D.* II. 63; *S.* II. 101.
[47] *M.* I. 257: *aññatra paccayā n'atthi viññāṇassa sambhavo ti.*
[48] *D.* II. 62; *DB*. II. 59.
[49] *D.* II. 63; *DB*. II. 61.
[50] S. II. 2; *KS*. II. 2.

Depending upon the eye and the visible object arises visual consciousness. The meeting (*saṅgati*) of these three is contact (*phassa*). Depending upon contact arises feeling (*vedanā*). What one feels one perceives. What one perceives, one reasons about (*vitakketi*). What one reasons about, one is obsessed with. What one is obsessed with is the origin of the number of perceptions and obsessions, which assail a man in regard to visible object cognizable by the eye, belonging to the past, future and present. This holds true with the other five triads.[51]

According to this statement, sense experience or consciousness as cognitive element is arisen due to the condition of the interaction or contact (*phassa*) between the sense and its object. The feeling is arisen when there is the coming together (*saṅgati*) of these three. From feeling arise perception, reasoning and obsession. The stream of experience thus conditioned by the stream of becoming (*bhava-sota*).[52] It should be kept in mind that the function of consciousness, either cognizing or discriminating or being merely aware of, is in fact, a "conditioned process" rather than an entity:

In dependence on consciousness arise mind-and-matter (*viññānapaccayā nāmarūpam*), and from the ceasing of consciousness is the ceasing of the psycho-physical combination (*viññānanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho*); and again.

In dependence on *saṅkhārā* arises consciousness (*saṅkhārapaccayā viññanam),* and from the ceasing of activities is the ceasing of consciousness (*saṅkhāranirodhā viññānanirodho)*.[53]

In other words, the quoted passage shows that consciousness is generated by conditions, apart from conditions there is no origination of consciousness.[54] In addition to it, consciousness cannot have its independent existence apart from the other four aggregates. On the contrary, the five aggregates are mutual grounds for their dependently arisen existence and nourishment:

Consciousness may exist having matter as its means (*rūpupāyaṁ*), matter as its object (*rūpārammaṇaṁ*), matter as its support (*rūpapatiṭṭhaṁ*), and seeking delight in it may grow, increase and develop. Similarly, this holds true with the other three aggregates, viz., feeling, perception and disposition.

He who say that "I shall show the coming, the going, the passing away, the arising, the growth, the increase or the development of consciousness apart from physical body, feeling, perception and disposition" would be speaking of something that does not exist.[55]

In this statement, the self (*ātman*) as the subject and object of the metaphysical *Upaniṣads* is denied. Here the subject is not the substantial agent that feels, that speaks, that experiences etc., but only serial flux of consciousness dependently arisen out of conditions.[56] Accordingly, human personality, experience and the experienced world are relative to one another and therefore they do not have any independent existence.[57]

---

[51] *M.* I. 111-2: *cakkhuñ ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṁ tiṇṇaṁ saṅgati phasso phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṁ sañjānāti taṁ vitakketi* . . . Translation after *MLS.* I. 145, D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 32, and *EB*. IV. 236.

[52] D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 32.

[53] *M.* I. 53.

[54] *M.* I. 257-9; *MLS.* I. 313-5.

[55] *S.* III. 58. Translation with modification from W. Rahula (1978): 25.

[56] *M.* I. 256.

[57] A. Tilakaratne (1993): 50.

Nature of Consciousness:

There are three characteristics attributed to consciousness (*viññāṇa*), being (1) unextended (*anidassanaṁ*), (2) infinite (*anantaṃ*), and (3) luminous everywhere (*sabbato pabham*).[58] According to Buddhaghosa, consciousness is one that has the characteristic of cognizing.[59] This, in fact, echoes a textual passage, where it states: "It is called cognition because it cognizes."[60] W. Rahula[61] is of the opinion that consciousness does not recognize an object. It is rather a sort of mere awareness - awareness of the presence of an object.[62] *Viññāṇa* is characterized as playing the function of self-awareness.[63] This function is discussed clearly in comparison with feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*) in the *Mahāvedalla Sutta.*[64] Here *viññāṇa* is characterized as discriminating (*vijānāti*) all kinds of feeling, *vedanā* as feeling (*vedeti*) the feelings, and *saññā* as noting (*sañjānāti*) colors, such as, yellow, blue, etc. Being closely connected (*saṁsaṭṭha*), these three are stated as: "What one feels, that one notes; what one notes, that one discriminates." Thus, in the process of being aware of an object, *viññāṇa* does not function alone, but in association with *vedanā* and *saññā* also.[65]

Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as a continual stream of becoming (*bhavasota*)[66] becomes a living bridge, a gap-bridger or a key link "between-lives existence" (to borrow a phrase from Harvey)[67] or between different lives from birth to death and from death to rebirth.[68] The Buddha, having discovered that neither is there a substantial self (*ātman / jīva*) surviving unchangeable after death (eternalism, *sassatavāda*), nor does death put a being to total end (annihilationism, *ucchedavāda*), expounds the middle-way *dhamma*, which goes beyond these two extremes, i.e. conditioned arising. If there were eternally substantial soul or life-principle, which is whether identical with or different from the body, there would be no living of the holy life, no spiritual progress, as it is unchangeable. Similarly, if there being no unsubstantial being survived, but destroyed at death, no one would pay his attention to moral behaviors, for the reason there being no moral retribution is possible and, therefore, moral motivation for spiritual perfection would be meaningless in the present and be cut off at death. In both cases, morality is denied.[69]

The Buddha states that the physical body (*kāyo*) which has its form (*rūpī*) is basically made from the four great elements, produced by the mother and father, subject to erasion (*ukkhādana*), abrasion (*parimaddana*), dissolution and disintegration,[70] while consciousness as a stream (*viññāṇa-sota*),[71] which is unbroken (*abbocchinna*) in causally conditioned process (*paṭiccasamuppanna*) continues its course in rebirth, as the generator (*janaka*) of a being (*purusa*). Unlike the scientists

[58] *D.* I. 223: *Viññāṇam anidassaṇaṁ anantaṁ sabbato pabhaṁ.*
[59] *Vism.* IV. 452.
[60] *M.* I. 292: *vijānāti ti kho tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati.*
[61] W. Rahula (1978): 23.
[62] I shall turn to this later.
[63] *S.* II. 94-5; III. 9-10; IV. 195.
[64] *M.* I. 292-3.
[65] Cf. *M.* I. 301: "Feeling and perception are kammic activities of mind." (*saññā ca vedanā cittasaṅkhāro*).
[66] *S.* I. 15.
[67] P. Harvey (1995): 89.
[68] *S.* II. 65: "Consciousness being established and growing, the comes to be renewedly continual existence in the future." (*tasmiṁ patiṭṭhite viññāṇe virūḷhe āyatiṁ punabbhavābhinibbati hoti*). Cf. *S.* I. 122; *S.* III. 124.
[69] *S.* II. 60-1.
[70] *D.* I. 76; *DB.* I. 86.
[71] *D.* III. 105.

admitting only two purely physical factors, i.e. the father'/male's sperm and the mother'/female's egg merged at a women's conception-period, the Buddha declares that apart from these two, there should be the third factor,[72] which is purely conscious or psychic - *gandhabba* or *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa* - a term for consciousness (*viññāṇa*), or consciousness-element (*viññāṇa-dhātu*), or the stream of consciousness (*viññāṇa-sota*),[73] or rebirth consciousness (*saṁvattanika-viññāṇa*) descending into the mother's womb, at the time of conception (*gabbhassa-avakkanti*), then psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*) as an embryo would come to birth in this state of being.[74] At death, from the last thought or death-consciousness (*cuti-viññāṇa/citta*) belonging to the previous life there arises the first the moment of consciousness or rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) of the present birth. Death-consciousness and rebirth-consciousness are both aspects of *bhavaṅga*.[75] Appearing at the moment of formation of an embryo, this consciousness-element (*viññāṇa-dhātu*) carries with it all the seeds (*bīja*) or *saṅkhārā* of the previous lives, forming the ground for emergence of psycho-physical personality (*nāma-rūpa*). This is called conception (*gabbhassa avakkhanti // pratisandhi*) or rebirth (*punarbhava*). To this the canonical passage runs thus: "Based on consciousness… there is descent into the womb. This descent taking place, psycho-physical personality come to pass. Conditioned by psycho-physical personality is six sense organs. Conditioned by six sense organs is contact. Conditioned by contact is feeling…"[76]

In this process, there is no an agent transmigrating from one life to another, but there is only a conscious moment unbrokenly continues (*abbocchinna*) transforming ethical energies (*kamma*) or all mental disposition (*saṅkhāra*) from one life to another. During the process of continual existence between both worlds: the past and this as well as this and the next, there is no self-entity but only consciousness personality factor, which are neither the same nor different (*na ca so na ca añño*),[77] repeatedly enters womb after womb (*gabbhā gabbhaṁ*).[78] The working scope of consciousness is extended to the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*).[79] Here the evolving consciousness (*saṁvattanika viññāṇa*) continues experiencing supreme pleasure and happiness of the *arūpa-jhāna.* Only in the state "cessation of perception and feeling" (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) all conscious experience such as perceptions and feelings are stopped functioning without remainder. This state is the highest and peaceful, which one can experiences

---

72 *M.* I. 265: "Monks, it is on the conjunction of three things that there is conception. If there is here a coitus of the parents, but it is not the mother's season and the *gandhabba* is not present - for so long there is not conception. If there is a coitus of the parents and its is mother's season, but the *gandhabba* is not present - for so long there is not conception. But if, monks, there is here a coitus of the parents and it is the mother's season and the *gandhabba* is present, it is on the conjunction of these three things that there is a conception." Translation by I.B. Horner, *MLS.* II. 321. It is not out of place to note here that "mother's season" is understood as "at the right time in a women's conceptable period."

73 This term appears in *D.* III. 105: "He undestands a man's stream of consciousness which is uninterupted at both ends is established in both this world and the next." (*purisassa ca viññāṇasotaṁ pajānāti ubhayato abbocchinnam idhaloke paṭṭhitañ ca paraloke paṭṭhitañ ca*).

74 *D.* II. 63; *DB.* II. 60: "Ānanda, if consciousness were not to descend into the mother's womb, would name-and-form form in the mother's womb? No, Lord." (*Viññāṇaṁ va hi Ānanda mātu kucchiṁ na okkamissattha, api nu kho nāmarūpa mātu kucchismiṃ samucchissatthāti? No h'eteṁ bhante.*) Also *S.* II. 101: "When consciousness is established and inscreases then name-and-form descends [into the womb of the mother]" (*yattha patiṭṭhitaṁ viññāṇaṁ virūḷhaṁ atthi attha nāmarūpassa avakkanti*).

75 E.R. Sarathchandra (1958): 26.

76 *A.* I. 175; *GS.* I. 160. Cf. *D.* II. 63; *S.* II. 101.

77 *Milin.* 40.

78 *Sn.* 278.

79 *M.* II. 264

only in *jhāna*.[80] In brief, psychologically, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is related to kammic activities (*saṅkhāra*) associated with perceptive process; ontologically, it is responsible for continual existence in *saṁsāra*; and soteriologically, it undergoes transformed toward freedom, through gradual process of elimination of all unwholesome motivational forces.

As a constituent or factor (*kkhandha // skandha*) or element (*dhātu*) of human personality (*nāmarūpa*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is neither a permanent substance nor the self/soul/spirit. This simple truth is very difficult to realize even some of the Buddha's own disciple. A monk called Sāti is reported to have held an eternalist theory (*sassatavāda*) of consciousness, wrongly admitting that it is the "same consciousness" that transmigrates and wanders about, and it is that consciousness that speaks, that feels, that experiences the fruition of ethical deed here and there.[81] This eternalist a and empirical theories of self, identifying consciousness with a substantial soul,[82] which is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change and will stand firm like unto the eternal (i.e. moon, sun, sea, great earth and mountain etc.),[83] is refuted by the Buddha as wrong view.[84] Consciousness according to the Buddha is merely the knowing activity (*vijānātīti… viññāṇaṁ*)[85] without the commonly postulated existence of a permanent, substantial ego as the transcendent substratum of such an activity,[86] but is uniquely responsible for continual existence of sentient beings in the *saṁsāra.*

Kinds of Consciousness: Traditional Sixfold Consciousness

According to Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda Buddhism, there are only six kinds of consciousness (*viññāṇa*), viz., visual consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇā*), auditory consciousness (*sota-viññāṇā*), olfactory consciousness (*ghāna-viññāṇā*), gustatory consciousness (*jivhā-viññāṇā*), tactile consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇā*) and mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇā*). The emergence of the sixfold consciousness is purely conditioned processes. Depending upon sense-organs and their corresponding sense data or objects arise corresponding consciousnesses. In other words, the presence, interaction or coming together (*saṅgati*) of these two necessary and sufficient conditions, i.e. the internal sense-organ and the external sense-object are the arising of six sense-consciousnesses. The scope of the first five sensory consciousnesses is very limited and confined to their corresponding objects only. That is to say visual consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇā*) works in the contact-field of the visible and eyes; auditory consciousness (*sota-viññāṇā*) of sounds and ears; olfactory consciousness (*ghāna-viññāṇā*) of smells and nose, gustatory consciousness (*jivhā-viññāṇā*) of tastes and tongue, and tactile consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇā*) of tangible and body; while mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇā*) apart from its working-scope i.e. mental objects (*dhamma*) and mind (*mano*) covering also the fields of the former five. As regards the function of these consciousnesses, there is a major difference between them. The first five sensory consciousnesses are passive, whereas the mental consciousness more active. This is so because there is few mental concomitants (*cetasika*)

80 *M.* I. 398 ff.
81 *M.* I. 258; *MLS.* I. 313.
82 *S.* III. 56-7; *KS.* III. 48-8: The other four kinds are the identification of either the physical body or feeling or perception, or disposition with the eternal self.
83 *MA*. I. 71.
84 *M.* I. 8. This recurs at *M.* I. 258ff.
85 *S.* III. 87.
86 A. Verdu (1985): 52.

associated with the former, while all of them found with the latter.[87] In some cases, the *viññāṇa* of the five senses are nothing but a bare awareness or sensation of a sensory object being present, without any discrimination, not producing knowledge of any sort.[88] In other cases, accompanying with the mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*) the fivefold sensory consciousness is followed by a series of point-instants of attentingn (*āvaṭṭana*), receiving (*sampaṭicchana*), examining (*santīraṇa*), determining (*votthapana*), registering (*javana*), etc. until a complete act of perception is achieved.[89] In such cases, the fivefold consciousness is a bare awareness of the presence of the object plus the knowledge of which is determining or sense-modality it belongs to, working in unison with accompanying consciousness, which discriminates the object into its basic parts or aspects.[90] It would not be out of place to note here that according to Vasubandhu these six sensory consciousnesses are not six separate conscious entities, but rather various aspects of the "same conscious element" called *viññāṇa*.[91]

The later Theravāda adds a new concept, namely, *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa* or *bhavaṅga-citta*,[92] or unconscious mind/continuum, which is, to some extent, similar to that of *alāya-vijñāna* of the *Vijñānavāda* or Yogācāra Buddhism.[93] They further differentiate it from a conscious mind (*vīthi-citta*). Of these, the former is the fundamental or original and purified consciousness (*pakati-mano*), which is defiled by elements associated with the latter.[94] In the *Suttapiṭaka*, while mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*) arises through and in dependence on mind (*mano*) and mental objects (*dhammā*),[95] in the *Visuddhimagga*, on the other hand, it arises in dependent on *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa,* mental object (*dhamma*) and attention (*manasikāre*).[96] According to the *Visuddhimagga,* in the period of deeply dreamless sleep, the *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa* occurs as long as no other state of mind arises to interrupt its continuity occurring endlessly.[97]

Eightfold Consciousness of Yogācāra Buddhism

In Yogācāra system of ethico-psychology, the number of consciousness is known as eight (C. 八 識), namely, traditional six kinds of consciousness (C. 前 六 識) consisting the five sensory consciousnesses (C. 前 五 識) and mental or non-sensory consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa,* C. 意 識) plus two new kinds, viz., ego-consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas* C. 末 那 識) and storehouse-consciousness (*alāya-vijñāna* C. 阿 賴 耶 識). The conscious activites of a human being, according to Yogācāra, are not only the scope of, nor amount to five senses (*indriya-vijñāna*). There are still

87 For further see W. M. McGovern (1979): 133f.
88 For different interpretations in this regard, see E. R. Saratchandra (1958): 25f; *EB*. IV. 240f.; P. Harvey (1995): 148-51.
89 *Abhs*. 19. Quoted from *EB*. IV. 240a. Cf. *EB*. IV. 176b.
90 P. Harvey (1995): 150.
91 *Kośa*. 1-11.
92 It literally meaning "conscious factor responsible for becoming" can be differently rendered as "subliminal consciousness" (S.Z. Aung & Mrs. Rhys Davids 1910: 27); "unconscious continuum" (E.R. Sarathchandra 1958: 49); "infra-consciousness" (H. Saddhatissa 1970: 42); "dynamic unconscious" (K.N. Jayatilleke 1975: 226), and "life continuum" by Nāṇamoli. According to P. Harvey, the rendering "latent life-continuum discernment is the most appropriate term (1995): 161. Here I borrow a phrase used by D. J. Kalupahana, *EB*. IV. 240b.
93 Walpola Rahula claims that "although not developed as in the Mahāyāna, the original idea of *alāya-vijñāna* was already there in the Pāli canon" (1978): 99.
94 *Dhs.A*. 812.
95 *M*. I. 112: *Manañ ca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano-viññāṇaṁ.*
96 *Vism*. xv. 39: *Bhavaṅgamana dhamma manasikāre paṭicca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṁ.*
97 *Vism*. xiv. 114.

deeper ranges of consciousness, such as mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*), ego-consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas*) and storehouse-consciousness (*alāya-vijñāna*). Mental consciousness serves as the collector and integrator of the various impressions received by the five senses and produced what we may called mental image or idea. The ego-consciousness works as ego-center creating the false notion or feeling of the subject that feels, thinks, enjoys, or experiences. *Alāya-vijñāna* is a reservoir in which all ideas, impressions, perceptions and cognitions are deposited. To differentiate them from one another, we can follow the distinction made by Huì-Yuaên (慧 遠), as follows (as seen in Figure 3):

Five sensory consciousnesses (C. 前 五 識)	the senses or consciousness (C. 識)
6th consciousness (C. 第 六 識)	the intent (C. 意)
7th consciousness (C. 末 那 識)	the false mind (C. 妄 心)
8th consciousness (C. 阿 賴 耶 識)	the true mind (C. 真 心)

Traditional Six Consciousnesses (C. 前 六 識) or the third manifestation (C. 第 三 能 變). According to Vasubandhu, the manifestation and function of mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna* C. 意 識) takes place always, except in some cases. The occasions for its functions removed, either contemporary or forever, are (1) two final stages of *dhyāna*, namely, the state of neither perception nor non-perception (*naiva saṁjña naivāsaṁjñā*) and the state of cessation of all feelings and perceptions (*saṁjñā-vedayita-nirodha*), (2) dreamless sleep, and (3) a state absent of thought.[98] The manifestation of consciousnesses is based upon dependence (*anyonyavaśād*) in accordance with its modes or ways. Only on the basis of mutual dependence, consciousnesses can proceed, and discriminations are born accordingly.[99] Thus, six forms of consciousness is purely functional, not an uninterruptedly eternal ego-entity.

The seventh consciousness (C. 第 七 識) or *kliãṭa-manas* (C. 末 那 識) or the second manifestation (*pariṇāma*) or transformation/evolution (C. 第 二 能 變). *Kliṣṭa-manas*, literally meaning "soiled-mind consciousness" can be rendered as "self-consciousness."[100] In its functional meaning, I would suggest the two renderings, "oge-consciousness," or "I-making consciousness." This *kliṣṭa-manas* is spontaneously subtle notion or feeling of 'I' (*aham/aham iti*), or 'Mine' (*mameāti*), or 'I-making' (*ahaṁkāra / mama*), or the conceit "I am" (*asmimāna-kleśa*). It is, functionally, a form of consciousness, characterized as the one which has the form of "conceiving" (*manyanā*) by way of notion of I (*ahaṁkāra*) and of feeling of identity (*asmimāna*). The function of *manas,* possessing of all forms of emotion and cognition i.e. contact (*sparśa*), attention (*manaskāra*), feeling (*vit / vedanā*), perception (*saṃjnā*) and volition (*cetanā*),[101] is defiled (*kliṣṭa*) and associated (*saṁprayukta*) with fourfold defilement (*kleśa*), viz., self-confusion or ignorance with regard to self (*ātmāmoha* C. 我 癡), self-view or false view/perception of the self (*ātma-dṛṣṭi / satkāya-dṛṣṭi* C. 我 見), self-pride or self-esteem (*asmimāna / ātma-māna* C. 我 慢) and self-love (*ātma-sneha* C. 我 愛).[102] It is believed that *kliṣṭa-manas* constantly (*nityakālam*) occurs and functions simultaneously with *alāya-vijñāna* on one hand, and conceives the latter as its object, on the other, in the form of "I am [this]" (*asmīti*) and "[this is my] Self (*aham iti*)."[103] This is so because, *manas* has probably the inclination

98 *Triṃś.* 16.
99 *Triṃś.* 18.
100 W. M. McGovern (1979): 134.
101 *Triṃś.* 7.
102 *Triṃś.* 6: *Kleśaiś caturbhiḥ sahitaṁ nivṛtāvyākṛtaiḥ sadā, ātma-dṛṣty ātma-mohātma-mānātma-sneha-saṁjñitaiḥ.*
103 *Triṃś.* 6. *Aham iti,* here, can be read as "[this is] I."

to identify (*asmīti-chanda*) *alāya-vijñāna* with the real and permanent ego-entity (*ātman*), with reference to the personal existence (*ātmabhāva / āśraya*) or resulting maturation (*vipāka*) containing all seeds (*bīja*). In fact, *alāya-vijñāna* can neither be considered as the substantial ego-entity, nor the fundamental objective basis of the notion of I or ego or the feeling of identity. Due to its attachment to the notion of I and Mine, and the feeling of identity, *manas* is regarded as the mental pollution (*saṁkleśa*). Its functional existence is not found in the state of cessation of feelings and perceptions (*saṁjñā-vedayita-nirodha*), nor in the Worthy One (*Arhat*), nor in the supra-mundane path (*lokottara-mārga*).[104]

The eighth consciousness (C. 第 八 識) or *alāya-vijñāna* (C. 阿 賴 耶 識) or the first manifestation (C. 第 一 能 變). *Alāya-vijñāna*, etymologically meaning consciousness that dwells in and sticks to the body (*kāyālayanatām upādāya*),[105] is the consciousness-containing-all-seeds (*sarvabījakaṃ vijñāna / cittam*) or store-house consciousness (藏 識).[106] *Alāya-vijñāna* is also known as *ādānavijñāna*[107] in the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*[108] and fundamental consciousness (*mūla-vijñāna*) in some other texts. Comprising all seeds (*sarvabījaka*), *alāya-vijñāna* functions from life to life as the basis (*mūla-vijñāna* c. 根 本 識) of five sense-consciousnesses (C. 前 五 識), non-sensory/mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna,* C. 第 六 識) and *kliṣṭa-mana.* The function of *alāya-vijñāna* as a base (*mūla*) of other forms of consciousness is compared with the water on which the waves arise (*taraṅgāṅāṁ yathā jale*).[109] It is characterized as morally neutral (*abyākṛtatva*) and not obstructed (*anivṛtaâvyākṛta*) by defilements. The manifestation of *alāya-vijñāna* is a constantly uninterrupted process involving in contact (*sparśa*), mental ideation (*manaskāra*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saṁjnā*) and intention (*cetanā*). *Alāya-vijñāna* is characterized as the resultant (*vipāka*) and the container of all its seeds (*sarva-bījaka*, C. 一 切 種 子) or dispositional tendencies/energies (*vāsanā* C. 習 氣) of ethical actions (*karma* C. 業) in the previous lives, which is matured or ripen (*paripāka*).[110] The first characterization is aimed at refuting essentialist approach to consciousness, while the second, at denouncing materialist approach to consciousness. The essentialist approach leads to eternalism (*sassatavāda*) or a kind of eternalist search of a self (*bhava-diṭṭhi*), whereas the materialist approach, to annihilationism (*ucchedevāda*) or a kind of seeking to annihilate a self (*vibhava-diṭṭhi*).[111] Comparatively, although their method are different, Vasubandhu's analysis of the manifestation or evolution of consciousness is, purposively, met with the Buddha's analyses of psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*), of five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), of six element (*cha-dhātu*), of twelve spheres (*āyatana*), of eighteen elements (*dhātu*), and of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as functional process, both aiming at refuting the metaphysical and empirical self (*ātman*).

104 *Triṃś.* 7.

105 Hattori Masaaki states that "*Ālaya*" is a derivative of the verb "*ā-lī,*" which means "settle down upon" or "abide in" something and connotes a "dwelling," "receptacle" or "storehouse." For example, "*himālyaya*" means "storehouse of snow." The *ālyaya*-consciousness is said to be a storehouse in which the residual force (*vāsanā*) of all previous experiences has been stored up as latent impressions." *The EB.* 21. 1. (1988): 23. For detailed discussion on its etymology see L. Schmithausen (1987): I. 18-33; II. 290 n. 183.

106 It is attributed with threefold function, namely, the container (能 藏) of all seeds (*bīja*), the contained (所 藏) being received all influences of all other consciousnesses, and the unavoidable object of false notion of 'I' of the *kliṣṭa-mana* (執 藏).

107 By using this term, it indicates the function of taking possession of a new body or basis-of-personal-existence at the moment of linking up (*pratisandhi*), a function which is expressed by "*parigraha*" or "*upādāna*" but also "*ādāna*" both in canonical and in Yogācāra texts. Reference from L. Schmithausen (1987): I. 49ff.

108 *Saṁdh.* V. 3.

109 *Triṃś.* 15.

110 *Triṃś.* 2: 阿 賴 耶 識：異thuïc一 切 種.

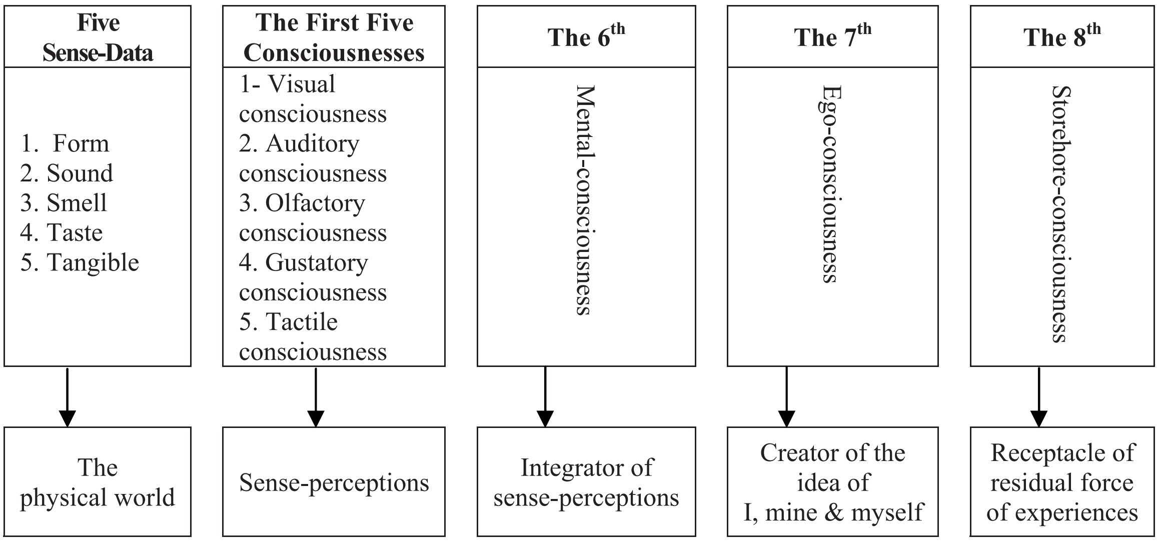
111 *D.* I. 12-45; *DB.* I. 26-55.

Like *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa / citta* in Pali Buddhism, among eight kinds of consciousness (*vijñāna*), *alāya-vijñāna* is the only consciousness remained at death and then recurring at mother's womb at the time of conception. With its entering the mother's womb, the psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*) would be able to function.[112] In the process of dying, all *vijñānas* withdraws from the body in steps and order, starting either from the upper or the lower or the middle part of the body with indication of disappearance of bodily heat. The first five sense-consciousnesses (C. 前五 識) go first, next to mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa* C. 第 六 識), then *kliṣṭa-manas* (C. 末 那 識), and finally*, alāya-vijñāna* (C. 阿 賴 耶 識）.

Alāya-vijñāna, although being the only *vijñāna* remained functional in the absorption into the cessation of feelings and perceptions (*saṁjñā-vedayita-nirodha-samāpatti*) to keep it alive and to prevent body from dying, is entirely transformed into wisdom, when a being reaches the stage of attainment of sainthood (*arhat*).[113]

Summing up: for the Buddha, consciousness (*viññāṇa*), mind (*citta*), thought or mentation (*mano*), mental factors (*cetasika*) along with matter (*rūpa*) are merely functional. If the function of matter (*rūpa*) is "resisting" (*ruppatīti rūpaṁ*),[114] the paradigm function of consciousness and mind is "being conscious" (*vijānātiti viññāṇaṁ*).[115] They are neither altogether nor separately considered as substantial entity-self but only a series of conscious experience. Their being functional is described in dynamic terms as a flow (*sota*), a continuum (*satāna*), a running (*javana*) or a process (*vīthi*).

Figure 3: Yogācāra System of Consciousnesses



[112] Cf. *D.* II. 63: *viññāṇa ca hi Ānanda mātu kucchi(smiṁ) na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṁ mātu kucchismiṁ samucchissatha.*
[113] *Trim*土．5.
[114] *S.* III. 86.
[115] *S.* III. 87.

A Synchronistic Method of Higher Processes

Dr. Dion Oliver Peoples
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Buddhists, if they take the social-guidance philosophy seriously, are likely to label themselves as a disciple of the Buddha. As disciples of the Buddha, we may think that we are all students of his dispensation – whatever the Buddha taught, we are likely to learn these teachings; and if they accord rightly to our experience, we embrace the teaching. Buddhists across the world are likely to know or follow the same basic sets of principles – in this sense there is unity in the traditions; and all of the traditions accept that the Pali Tipitaka contains the fundamental teachings of the Buddha, although their distinct teachings may diverge from the apparent fundamentals. At one time, this was likely: one dispensation or a single form of Buddhism. This single form was collected in the Saṅgīti Sutta, and may be the likely literary candidate to express the foremost teachings as an attempt at the unification of Buddhist philosophical views. As the various sanghas became more and more distant from each other, their singularities led to multiple expressions of the Buddhist doctrine. Some of these teachings have been wrongly labeled by modern scholars with no regard or respect to the early Buddhist tradition.[1] Once the various traditions learn to extend basic respect for each other's sect, we can begin to look at the fundamental teachings – those that we all have in common. There are also the grounds of diversity – but too much inquiry into this may cause the line of communication to become static. The Agamas and the Nikayas are basically a common set of literature for Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists – or so named as the Sutrayanists by the Vajrayanists – perhaps differing here and there in terms of synonyms, and the root language of the texts, but to over-generalize: the teachings are almost the same or correlate. There is one instance preserved in the text that indeed served as the stage for unifying all of the Buddhist teachings. For these Sutrayanists, one of the earliest attempts to hold a council for the setting up of Buddhist education can be found in the Saṅgīti Sutta. This discourse must be looked at in whole, and not as an index for convenient reference situations. Apart from what can be gleamed from the Saṅgīti Sutta itself, it is not merely enough to just read the discourse and use it as one is citing an index.[2] In the just-previously annotated text, an exploration was made to determine how the Saṅgīti Sutta was used as a proto-Abhidhammic text by various traditions, a revised look at this will occur below:

Examining Secondary Literature: Pertaining to Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma

Apart from most of the Theravāda Buddhist Tipiṭaka (canonical texts) and commentaries available, one research-work became particularly valuable: *The Journal of the Pāli Text Society, Volume V 1897-1907.* This journal contains the century-old, but useful, article by Professor Takakusu: "The Abhidharma Literature of the Sarvāstivādins" from 1904-1905 (pages 65-146). Another important and recently published text is Venerable Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti's *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma*. Sarvāstivāda Buddhism was one of the oldest Theravāda schools before it split away

[1] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3AHinayana/Archive_2 - people in this very day and age continue to disrespect the Theravada tradition. Any steps towards unity should include the replacing of the pejorative.

[2] See: Dion Oliver Peoples: Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta (Wangnoi: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2012)

and eventually became assimilated into Mahāyana and disappeared as a distinct unit; being previously separated from the Theravāda school before King Asoka's Council; this is known because some of the questions in the Kathā-Vatthu[3] are directed towards them. The Sarvāstivāda school existed into the 15th Buddhist century (1000s CE, or present in the 7th CE in Mathurā and Kāśmīra[4]), and covered the largest, most extensive geographical area of any school (from India into Persia and into China, even into southern India and Sumatra, Java and Champa-Cochin China.). It seems many of their texts have been preserved in the Chinese language, and little information is available in English. Takakusu's century-old article (p. 69) states that Sarvāstivāda doctrine was known as Vaibhasika; and the Sarvāstivādins (meaning: the school that states that everything exists), were known to be great thinkers with a highly organized abhidharmic-philosophical system, their own Vinaya-texts, and their own Abhidhamma-texts which were rooted in the Saṅgīti Sutta[5][6], although many of their texts were written after the Theravāda texts.[7]

Like the Theravāda School of Buddhism, the Sarvāstivādins have seven books comprising their Abhidhamma collection, one is attributed to be the work of Sāriputta (the *Dharmaskandha*[8] - although the Tibetan version and the Chinese version seem to be different texts); the Sarvāstivāda Abhidhamma has one principle text and six supplementary texts – the *Jñānaprasthāna* is believed to be the primary text (authored by Kātyāyanīputra) and written in a dialect that is not Sanskrit – possibly the Kāśmīra dialect.[9] Professor Tanakusu emphasizes that this is the most important work in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidhamma literature. A look at the eight books of the Jñānaprasthāna reveals the nature of the text as well as similarities that can be derived from the Saṅgīti Sutta.[10]

---

[3] See: Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, Points of Controversy or Subjects of Discourse: being A Translation of the Kathā-Vatthu from the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, (London: Pāli Text Society, 1969)

[4] Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti: Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Center of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2007), p. 64

[5] See, particularly: Hajime Nakamura: Indian Buddhism – A Survey with Bibliographical Notes (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), p. 105: "The *Abhidharmasaṅgītiparyāyapāda-śāstra* was compiled on the basis of the *Saṅgīti-sūtra* of the Sarvāstivādins. It has a close connection with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*. The act of compiling this text gradually led to the establishment of the Sarvāstivāda as an independent sect." Later, the text mentions: the Tibetan version of the *Prajñapti-śāstra* could be the referenced-source as well – so maybe there is some confusion, but there is no doubt that the true source of the Abhidhammic-materials is indeed the Saṅgīti Sutta – as scholars just elaborated on the points contained within the text.

[6] This is also explained elsewhere: "Abhidharmic tendencies, tendencies that led eventually to the growth of a separate literature, can be seen early in some scriptures. The use of numerical categories is one such tendency. The Saṅgīti-Suttanta lists a variety of items…" – as seen from the Introduction of: Louis de La Vallée Poussin & Leo M. Pruden: Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), p. xlii

[7] Hajime Nakamura: Indian Buddhism – A Survey with Bibliographical Notes (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), p. 105, footnote #18

[8] This information can be seen from the references cited within: Hajime Nakamura: Indian Buddhism – A Survey with Bibliographical Notes (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), p. 106: "There is an opinion that this text, the earliest of the six padasastras of the Sarvāstivādins, was composed at least 400 years after the Parinirvāṇa of the Buddha whereas another opinion is that the text was composed after the *Abhidharmasaṅgītiparyāyapāda-śāstra* and prior to other texts. Passages of the *Abhidharma-dharmaskandha-pāda-śāstra* were cited about fifteen times in the *Abhidharmasaṅgītiparyāyapāda-śāstra*. This text has a close connection with the *Vibhaṅga*."

[9] But another source claims fragments were found in Bamiyan, in modern-day Afghanistan. See: Hajime Nakamura: Indian Buddhism – A Survey with Bibliographical Notes (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), pp. 105-106

[10] See: Dion Oliver Peoples: Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta (Wangnoi: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2012)

Contents of the Jñānaprasthāna[11]	
Book One – Miscellaneous:	**Lokuttara-dhamma-vaggo:** What is lokuttara-dhamma? To what category does it belong? Why is it the highest in the world? The definition, its bearings, its relation to the 22 sakkāya-diṭṭhis, the transcendental conditions compared with the other conditions, etc… **Nana-vaggo:** the cause of knowledge, memory, doubt, six causes of stupidity reproved by the Buddha, cessation of the causes, etc… **Puggala-vaggo:** How many of the 12 paticcasamuppadas do belong to the past, present, and future puggala and final liberation, etc… **Love and reverence vaggo:** respect out of love (pema), respect out of honor (garava), two kinds of honor, with wealth (dhana) and with religion (dhamma), strength of the body, Nibbāna, the ultimate end, etc… **Ahirikanottappa-vaggo:** shamelessness, fearlessness of sinning (anottappa), the increasing demerits (akusalamula), etc… **Rūpa-vaggo:** the rūpa-dhamma going through birth and death is impermanent – why can it be called a form; impermanence (anitya), etc… **Objectlessness (anattha) vaggo**: All the practices of austerities are vain – things desired cannot be secured, etc… **Cetana-vaggo:** thinking, reflecting, awakening (vitakka), observing (vicara), unsettled mind (uddacca), ignorance, arrogance (mana), hardness of heart, etc…
Book Two – Connections of Human Passions **(Samyojana):**	**Akasulamula-vaggo:** 3 samyojanas, 5 views, 9 samyojanas, 98 anusayas, their details, scopes, results, etc **Sakadagamin-vaggo:** the germs of passion, etc., still left in the sakadagamins, 9 forms of pahana-parinna, etc… **Vaggo on man:** moral defilements arising from views, those arising from practices, 4 fruits of samanna, death and rebirth, regions having no rebirth, etc…
Book Three – Nana (Jnana) – Knowledge:	**Vaggo on Siksanga (sekha and asekha):** knowledge attained by the lower grades of sanctification, the state of an Arahant, views (ditthi), knowledge (nana), wisdom (panna), views of those free from passion (anasava-samaditthi), etc… **Vaggo on the 5 kinds of views (right and wrong):** wrong/right views, wrong/right knowledge, views of an asekha, etc… **Vaggo on the knowledge of another's mind (paracittanana):** what is the knowledge that discerns another's thought? The knowledge of the past life (pubbenivasanussatinana), etc… **Vaggo on the cultivation of knowledge:** cultivation of the eightfold knowledge, dharmajnana, anvayajnana, samvrtijnana, duhkhajnana, nirodhajnana, margajnana, ksayajnana, anutpadajnana – and the relation with the secular knowledge, etc… **Vaggo on knowledge attained by the seven types of ariya-puggalas:** 77 sorts of knowledges and all the bearings of knowledge discussed.

[11] The Journal of the Pāli Text Society, Volume V 1897-1907. This journal contains the century-old article by Professor Takakusu, "The Abhidharma Literature of the Sarvāstivādins" from 1904-1905 (pages 65-146) and A.K. Warder: Indian Buddhism 3rd Edition (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers 2004) pp. 326-327. Also considered was - Charles Willemen: Kumārajīva on Abhidharma from Mahachulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies (MJBS) Volume I, 2008 (Bangkok: MCU Press, 2008), pp. 145-156

Book Four - Intention (Kamma):	**Vaggo on wicked actions:** all details of sinful actions (3 duccaritas: kaya, vaci, mano) – their results, etc… **Vaggo on erroneous speech:** all details of sins by speech (micchavaca) – their results, etc… Himsa-vaggo: all details of sins of killing life, the results, etc… **Vaggo on the demonstratable and undemonstratable:** all good/bad actions (kusalakusala) relating to the past and future, etc… **Vaggo on actions bearing the self-same results:** actions bearing the fruits, etc… Here a curious allusion to speech is given. Speech is said to be in ten forms, i.e., Buddha-vak, -japla, -vyahara, -gira, -bhasya, -nirukti, -vak-svara, -vak-patha, action by mouth (-vak-karman), demonstration by mouth (-vag-vijnapti)
Book Five – The Four Great Realities **(Catur-mahā bhuta):**	**Vaggo on pure-organs (indriya):** The four elements – products of a combination of the four – complete and incomplete products, their causes, etc… **Vaggo on the conditions of the combination of the elements:** conditions (pratyaya), elements of the past, those of the future, etc… **Vaggo on the visible truth:** things belonging to the rūpa-dhatu are summarily explained **Vaggo on internal products/perception-elements:** sensations feelings, ideas, etc., are discussed
Book Six – Organs or Faculties (Indriya):	**Organ (indriya) vaggo:** 22 indriyas – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, the female, the male, life, happiness, suffering, rejoicing , sorrow, guarding, indifferent, believing, striving, recollection, contemplation, wisdom, the unknown, the known, the yet to be known, etc… **(Bhavo) Being-Vaggo:** kama-bhava, all forms of existence, rūpa-bhava, arupya-bhava, etc… **Vaggo on touch:** 16 kinds of touch **Vaggo on primal/equal mind:** does mind continue as it commenced? **Vaggo on mind that is primarily (one) produced:** do things thought to come into existence at the commencement of the activity of mind? **Fish-vaggo:** why are some complete in regard to 22 organs and others incomplete? **Vaggo on causes/attainment (prapti):** Are all the faculties of organs conditioned by the past?
Book Seven – Meditation or Concentration (Samādhi):	**Vaggo on the conditions of the past (attainments – prapti):** all conditions of the past, etc… **Vaggo on causes (pratyaya):** meditations on causes and conditions in the dhyana heavens **Vaggo on comprehension/liberation (vimutti):** 10 Kasiṇa meditations, 8 kinds of knowledge, 3 forms of Samādhi **Anagami-vaggo:** 5 states of the non-returner **Sakadagamin-vaggo:** states of the once-returner, attainments of the divine-eye, etc…
Book Eight – Views or Opinions (Ditthi):	**Vaggo on firm meditation/memory (satipatthana/smrtyupasthana):** meditations on the impurity of the body (kayanupassana), meditation on the evils of the senses (vedananupassana), mediation on the evanescence of thought (cittanupassana), meditation on the conditions of existence (dhammanupassana), etc… **Vaggo on desire (kama)/three forms of being (tribhava):** conditions of the three states of being **Vaggo on consciousness (saññā/samjna):** ten stages of consciousness as to impermanence, sorrow, anatman, impurity, death, destruction, etc.. (asubha, marana, ahare patikkula, sabbaloke anabhirati, anicca, anicce dukkha, dukkhe anattā, pahana, viraga, nirodha) **Vaggo on the time of knowledge (jnana):** knowledge that produces an abhorrence of this life, the relation of the knowledge with the aggregates (skandha), etc… **Vaggo on views**: erroneous views (micchaditthi) – ignorant views, views that there is no cause, abala, aviriya, etc… **Gatha-vaggo:** unbelieving mind – 36 wicked views – passions, brahmans, etc… and several parables.

As can be drawn, there are many components of dhamma inside the Jñānaprasthāna – which is perhaps why the text was held in such high regards. It is considered to be an innovation in Sarvāstivādin thought, their contribution to Buddhism, to apply dependent-origination to biological life.[12] Many of these contents exist inside the Saṅgīti Sutta. Another text to be examined is the *Saṅgīti-paryāya*. This text was a primitive commentary (the earliest of Sarvāstivāda Abhidhamma[13]) on the Saṅgīti Sutta[14]; and for Theravāda Buddhists – the existing Sumangala-Vilasini should serve ideally and equally as a replacement – although previous scholars stated that the Dhammasaṅgaṇī actually did replace the *Saṅgīti-paryāya*.[15] Tanakusu states that the *Saṅgīti-paryāya* is very similar (possessing numerical arrangements) to the Puggalapaññatti - although the texts are purposefully different.

Interestingly, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī holds a prominent position in everyday Thai life, although some people might not actually be aware of this. During Buddhist cremation ceremonies in Thailand, the first section of this mātikā[16] and other verses are recited for dead people. Traditionally, the entire table of contents is not recited – only the first section is recollected. During interviews from various learned monks – they could not adequately explain why, but it is still recited and at least understood. This mātikā is popular due to the different types of Dhammas that are recollected - beginning with wholesome, unwholesome, and undetermined Dhammas.

Two of the supplementary Sarvāstivāda Abhidhamma texts could be attributed to Sāriputta, although only one is certain to the previous scholars. The discrepancy concerns the *Saṅgīti-paryāya*. The suggestion states the organization of the text is similar to the Puggalapaññatti and the Anguttara-Nikāya which arranges material numerically, invoking the Saṅgīti Sutta, as perhaps the model for this text, despite different contents – or as Dhammajoti understands: a collection of scattered teachings.[17] A portion of this text refers to the Dharmaskandhas, and states that Sāriputta was personally inspired to collect the Dhamma from the Dasabala[18] because some competing sectarians were claiming

---

12 Louis de La Vallée Poussin & Leo M. Pruden: Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), p. li

13 Hirakawa Akira (translated by Paul Groner): A History of Indian Buddhism (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), p. 131

14 "Thus abhidharmic tendencies are clearly seen in many texts both Pāḷi and Chinese, so far advanced in many cases that it is merely a short step to real abhidhamma literature, as the Saṅgīti Sutta has led to the Saṅgīti-paryāya. There is in fact very little internal change from abhidharmic agamas to Abhidhamma works; indeed, greater internal changes have come about in later Abhidharma works at a subsequent period…" from: Louis de La Vallée Poussin & Leo M. Pruden: Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), p. xliii

15 A.K. Warder: Indian Buddhism 3rd Edition (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers 2004) p. 216

16 Please see different chanting texts, or: Edward Muller, The Dhammasaṅgaṇī (London: Pāli Text Society 1978); Pāli Chanting with Translations (Nakornpathom: Mahāmakutrājavidyālaya Press 2001/2544); or Phra Rajaworakhun Jaowatgittimsak (Saiyut Pannasaro). Nangsuu Suatmon Wat Patumwanaram-rajaworavihara. (Bangkok: Wat Patum wanaram Rajaworavihara, 2546) (in Pāli/Thai).

17 Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti: Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Center of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2007), p. 106

18 This is the term for the Buddha throughout the Jātakas. See Dion Oliver Peoples, "Reflections on Social Ethics in Buddhist Old-World Stories" - http://www.iabuconference.com/seminar_detail.php?smt_id=17 – accessed 18 September 2008. Buddhists recognize several names for the founder of their 'system': the Tathagata, the Buddha, and the Dasabala are just a few. A Dasabala (Buddha/Tathagata) has ten powers:

- Truly or actually understanding as it is, the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible
- Understanding as it truly is the results of actions (kammas) undertaken, past, future, and present, with possibilities and with causes
- Understanding as it truly is the ways leading to all destinations (all the states of existence and Nibbāna)

different doctrines. This is similar to material mentioned in the Saṅgīti Sutta. Tanakusu's pages 101-103 list the contents of this supplementary text. Dhammajoti claims that the Saṅgīti-sutta is the matrix (mātṛkā), which the Sarvāstivādins evolved or extended[19] into a fundamental abhidharma text – the *Saṅgīti-paryāya*.[20]

Likewise, if someone investigates the Theravāda discourses, readings reveal: answering questions seems to be a dominant feature in early Buddhism and Abhidhamma/ Abhidharma literature - as the Venerable Sāriputta demonstrates in the Mahāvedalla Sutta and from the contents of the Cūḷavedella Sutta – both from the Majjhima-Nikāya; but now, comparisons with the Saṅgīti Sutta and more abhidhammic-material will be made below:

- Understanding as it truly is the world with its many and different elements
- Understanding as it truly is how beings have different inclinations
- Understanding as it truly is the disposition of the faculties of other beings, other persons
- Understanding as it truly is the defilement, the cleansing and the emergence in regard to the jhānas, liberations, concentrations, and attainments
- Recollecting His manifold past lives (thus the relationship to the Jātakas and the reason why this term: the Dasabala, was sometimes used to represent the Buddha) – with their aspects and particulars for recollection
- With the divine eye which is purified and surpasses the human, sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate… and understands how beings pass on according to their action/ volition (kamma)…
- Realizing for Himself with direct knowledge, here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by taintless wisdom through the destruction of the taints.

See: Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (Wisdom Publications: Boston, MA 1995) pp. 165-167

[19] Louis de La Vallée Poussin & Leo M. Pruden: Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), p. xlviii – thus their confusion over the source is indeed bewildering. The source is not the Dasuttara Sutta – although both are rooted in the teachings of the venerable chief disciple, Sāriputta.

[20] Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti: Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Center of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2007), p. 7 & on p. 99, he quotes that Sāriputta composed this text comprising of 12,000 verses, and that a short version has 8000.

TEXTUAL COMPARISON:			
TEXT:	**SAṄGĪTI-PARYĀYA[21]**	**SAṄGĪTI SUTTA**	**PUGGALA-PAÑ-ÑATTI**
Intro:	Section on the Origin (nidana) (gives the setting) "Let us now unite ourselves and collect the Dhamma-vinaya, while our Master is still in the world, in order that there may be no dissention as to the teachings after the Buddha's death… to the benefit of the people."	Similar	*Lists of people-types and some descriptive information*
Sets of Ones:	All beings living on food…	Yes	50 types of individuals with one characteristic
Sets of Twos:	Mind and matter, means for entering and coming out of meditation, etc…	skill here pertains to Jhāna meditation	27 types of people with two characteristics
Sets of Threes:	Wholesome/unwholesome roots; wholesome/unwholesome thoughts; wholesome/unwholesome conduct; wholesome/unwholesome elements; persons; elders; accumulations; rebirth; feelings; knowledges; and 25 others…	Yes	17 types of people with three characteristics
Sets of Fours:	Noble beings; fruits of homelessness; persons; speeches, efforts, boundless states, four great efforts, and 14 others…	Yes	29 types of people with four characteristics
Sets of Fives:	Aggregates; aggregates of clinging; sorts of attachment (to nativity, home, love, luxury, religion), powers; faculties; Pure Abodes; rebirth-destinies; hindrances, and 16 others…	Yes, (powers in Sets of Fours and Sevens)	14 types of people with five characteristics
Sets of Sixes:	Groups of consciousness; groups of contact; groups of perception; groups of feelings, elements; abhiññas, unsurpassables; and 13 others…	Yes, (abhiññas (iddhis) mentioned in Set of Threes)	6 types of people with six characteristics
Sets of Sevens:	Factors of enlightenment, persons, latent proclivities, treasures, rules for settling disputes, and 8 others…	Yes, and nine others	2 types of people with seven characteristics
Sets of Eights:	Noble path, persons, giving, liberations, stages of mastery; worldly conditions; and 4 others	Yes, and five others	1 type of person with eight characteristics
Sets of Nines:	Abodes of beings; samyojanas (fetters?)	Yes, (fetters - in 7s)	1 type of person with nine characteristics
Sets of Tens:	Kasiṇas, qualities of the non-learner	Yes, and more	1 type of person with ten characteristics
Final Section:	Section on Admonition (closes the discourse with the Buddha stating: 'Well done Sāriputta…'. Then the Buddha turns to the Bhikkhus and states that they all should learn, hold, and recite the *Saṅgīti-paryāya* propounded by Sāriputta.)	The implication to do the same exists through proclaiming the way for chanting – one cannot do if not learned.	**The Puggalapañ-ñatti is a dissimilar text:** **278 Different Types of People Explained**

[21] Junjiro Takakusu: "The Abhidharma Literature of the Sarvāstivādins" from Journal of the Pāli Text Society, Volume V 1897-1907: 1904-1905; pp. 100-103 & consider the following, from: Louis de La Vallée Poussin & Leo M. Pruden:

If someone expounds the contents of the Saṅgīti Sutta, a text similar to the classical Abhidhamma texts could be produced, and this is very profound (since it would demonstrate the contents of these texts), considering the inclusion and position of the Abhidhamma in the Buddhist canon. There might not be any Abhidhamma, without the Saṅgīti Sutta. Indeed, the Saṅgīti Sutta here, demonstrates its value and potential to be expounded as any great text – which is why it has been historically recommended to be remembered. Additionally, it has the power to shape the development of Buddhist-sects, and as footnoted previously: the establishment of the independent Sarvāstavādin sect was due to the text gradually being expounded upon and developed.

The Dharmaskandha text attributed to the Arahant Sāriputta concerns itself in 21 sections with fundamental Sarvāstivāda principles (although the Chinese translator claims that this is the most important of all the Abhidhamma works and is another primary text for the Sarvāstivādins), mainly pertaining to emphasizing praxis[22]:

Twenty-One Sections of the Dharmaskandhas		
1: The Five Precepts	8: Constituents of Magic Power: meditation, energy, memory, suppression of desire	15: Branches of Knowledge (Bodhyanga)
2: The Sotāpanna, their attainments	9: Smrtyupsthanas (Modes of resolute mediation?): impurity of the body, evils of sensations, the evanescence of thought, conditions of thought	16: Miscellaneous Matters: mental faculties, passions, etc.
3: The Attainment of Purity; stages of an ariya-puggala	10: Ariya-satyas (Noble Truths)	17: Indriyas: 22 indriyas
4: The Four Fruits of Samana-ship	11: Jhāna Meditation: forms and processes	18: Ayatanas: 12 ayatanas – organs and objects of sense
5: Mental Experiences: feeling in the face of suffering/joy, etc.	12: The Immeasurable (apramana)	19: The Five Skandhas:
6: The Ariya-Vamsa – Noble Lineage	13: The Formless (arūpa)	20: Various Principles (Bahu/ Nana-dhatu): six principles, eighteen principles, 62 total principles
7: Right Victory: four forms of victory	14: Bhavana-Samādhi: meditation for cultivating the reasoning faculty	21: The Twelve Pratiyasamutpadas Explained

Three of the above mentioned texts: the *Dharmaskandha,* the *Jñānaprasthāna*, and the *Saṅgīti-paryāya* are said to be the oldest of all of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature; and their respective relationship towards and development from the Saṅgīti Sutta and its contents has been shown - from the division of contents and further possible explanations.

Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), p. xlvii: "… composed approximately 200 years after the Nirvana of the Buddha. The contents of this work closely resemble the Dasuttara-suttanta of the Digha Nikāya; exists in Chinese translation, T vol. 26, no. 1536."

[22] Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti: Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Center of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2007), p. 103-104

Examining Secondary Literature: Pertaining to Theravāda Abhidhamma

Theravāda Buddhism's *Vibhaṅga*[23] illustrates matters similar to the Saṅgīti Sutta in its seventeenth chapter, entitled: *Analysis of Small Items*. The *Analysis of Small Items* is similar to the Saṅgīti Sutta in respects to presenting characteristics numerically; although these are not sets of Dhamma as illustrated in the Saṅgīti Sutta.

The Book of Analysis – Analysis of Small Items											
Set #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**Higher**
Saṅgīti #	**2**	**33**	**60**	**50**	**26**	**22**	**14**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**N/A**
Summary #	**72**	**18**	**58**	**15**	**15**	**14**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**7**	**8**
Exposition #	***48***	***35***	***103***	***25***	***15***	***14***	***7***	***8***	***6***	***7***	***3***
Total Items:	The Summary section contains an almost equal amount of dhamma-sets (231) to the contents listed in the Saṅgīti Sutta (230), whereas the exposition portions collectively expand on 271 terms, rather than dhamma-sets.										

Consider the rationality for illustrating the above: a future study could compare the contents of the chapter with the discourse in more depth, but here to be brief: following the summary of Dhammas, there exists the *Singlefold Exposition*, continuing numerically through the *Tenfold Exposition*, and the extra *Exposition of the Occurrences of Craving*. The section on Expositions details components in the summarized sets, thus illustrating the discrepancies in similar numerical values.

The Vibhaṅga maintains its position as a great resource for explaining terminology, assisting in doctrinal interpretations, or hermeneutical possibilities – words that one might not otherwise be familiar with. The *Analysis of Small Items*, teaches the exact negative mental states that need eradicated for the striving disciple – in this respect, the Saṅgīti Sutta covers more diverse (general/unspecific) material, because it ventures away from solely mental phenomena (conceptions) – the specialty of the Vibhaṅga. Certainly, the aims of the texts differ, and learning Dhamma can be gained from both – a benefit.

The *Analysis of Small Things* is rather like a glossary or a thesaurus of unwholesome terminology. The *Analysis of Small Items* differs from the non-descriptive index of the Saṅgīti Sutta in this respect – that there is no detailed-elaboration following the sets of Dhammas in the Saṅgīti Sutta. The Vibhaṅga, then, can be determined to be commentary on selected terminology. In some sections, the *Analysis of Small Items* serves as summary-material. The chapter is numerically similar to the Saṅgīti Sutta – and one should conduct an investigation or analysis of items: The seventeenth chapter of the Book of Analysis opens with a singlefold through a tenthfold summary of contents – as a sort of list by numerical contents.

[23] Pathamakyaw Ashin Thittila: The Book of Analysis – Vibhaṅga (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2002), pp. 452-513; additionally, a source from a prior footnote states: the *Abhidharma-dharmaskandha-pāda-śāstra* and the *Abhidharmasaṅgītiparyāyapāda-śāstra* could be closely connected with the *Vibhaṅga*. See, again: Hajime Nakamura: Indian Buddhism – A Survey with Bibliographical Notes (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), p. 106

There is another valuable and popular text to examine: if the several published versions of the Abhidhammattha-Sangaha[24] and related commentarial-material are included into consideration as a properly arranged and expounded model-text of Abhidhamma material - please view the similarities:

Abhidhammattha-Sangaha versus Saṅgīti Sutta		
Chapter and Major Abhidhammattha-Sangaha Topics:		**Inside the Saṅgīti Sutta**
Consciousness:	Triple Gems	Yes
	Conventional and ultimate realities	Not evident*
	Fourfold Ultimate Reality: consciousness, mental factors, matter, Nibbāna	Not evident*
	Five Aggregates	Yes
	Four Classes of Consciousness (Mundane and Supramundane)	Yes
	Wholesome or unwholesome	Yes
	Rooted in greed, hatred or delusion; or Rootless (from senses)	Yes
	Jhānas and Noble Attainments	Yes
Mental Factors	Mental Factors	Yes
Miscellaneous	Feelings, roots, functions, doors, objects, bases	Yes
Cognitive Process	Six Senses; processes, presentations, modes, great/slight objects, absorption, registration, attainment processes, planes	Yes
Process-Freed	Planes of existence, rebirth-linking, kamma, advent of death (mental-cosmology)	Yes
Matter	Elements, Concretely produced matter (senses), Non-concrete matter (characteristics), origination of matter, smiling, occurrence of matter, Nibbāna	Yes
Categories	Unwholesome: taints, floods, bodily knots, clingings, hindrances, latent dispositions, fetters, defilements; mixed: roots, jhāna factors, path factors, faculties, powers, predominants, nutriments; requisites of Enlightenment: four foundations of mindfulness, four supreme efforts, four means to accomplishment, five faculties, five powers, seven factors of Enlightenment, eight path factors, states and occurrences; the whole: five aggregates, twelve sense bases, eighteen elements, four noble truths	Yes
Conditionality	Method of dependent arising (12 links), method of conditional relations (24 conditions); analysis of concepts	Not evident*
Meditation Subjects	Calm; 40 Meditation Subjects; Analysis of Development; Analysis of Terrain; Attainment of Jhāna; Insight; Purification; Emancipation; Individuals; Attainments	Yes
***NOTE of Justification:**	***Not evident implies not being listed as a dhamma-set, for example: the concept of anicca, dukkha, anattā – is also absent from the Saṅgīti Sutta – however the components or links are dispersed under other categories.***	

[24] Nārada Mahā Thera: A Manual of Abhidhamma being Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Bhadanta Anuruddācariya (Colombo/Jakarta: Buddhist Publication Society, 1968, reprinted: 1979); Mrs. Rhys Davids (revised and edited) – Compendium of Philosophy (A Translation Now Made for the First Time from the Original Pāli of the Abhidhammattha-Sangaha, with Introductory Essay and Notes by Shwe Zan Aung) (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1995); Bhikkhu Bodhi (general editor): Abhidhammattha-Sangaha – A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (originally edited & translated by Mahāthera Nārada; with suggestions by U Rewata Dhamma, but later revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi,) (Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society Pariyatti Editions 1999); R.P. Wijeratne and Rupert Gethin (translators): Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha by Anuruddha) & Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī) by Sumaṅgala, being a commentary to Anuruddha's Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Lancaster, Pāli Text Society, 2007)– Therefore, the scholar has four versions, in his private collection, of the same basic text to work from and compare; and unless otherwise mentioned, the referrals are towards the Bhikkhu Bodhi version, preferred foremost, for its reading ease and layout, out of the various versions.

There is no claim whatsoever that the Abhidhammattha Sangaha and the Saṅgīti Sutta are directly linked. Merely stated, the similarities above should be observed for the common links between them. Again, the intention is to show the commonalities between the Saṅgīti Sutta and these collective Abhidhamma-texts; and to suggest the potential for the discourse to have been expounded upon by other ancient commentators or where future writers can be helpful when designing new works. This further demonstrates the Saṅgīti Sutta's potential to return to the level of awareness or preeminence. Implicitly, where the material is not evident, it can be collected from this indexed-catalogue, and re-illuminated, as the authors of the commentaries successfully demonstrated, in their respective works mentioned above.

Examining Secondary Literature: The Navakovāda:

The Navakovāda is a century-old text-manual found in Thailand primarily utilized for newly ordained Buddhists – and is subtitled as being the standard text employed in Thailand for educating those interested in the Dhamma. The Navakovāda is not based on the Saṅgīti Sutta, but is included for comparisons, because the text is a "selection of fundamental precepts and classified dhammas," - classified for the following reason: "Since it would not be possible in the time available to them for these bhikkhus to study and benefit from the voluminous texts and scriptures dealing with the Discipline and Dhamma."[25] The Saṅgīti Sutta also contains social regulations and classified dhammas, and are thus examined any potential or purposeful value.

These texts serve a parallel purpose: increasing the level of dhamma-awareness in disciples, regardless of their intended duration of monastic experience. There is no limitation placed upon the Saṅgīti Sutta. The stated objective of the Navakovāda follows its division: coherently divided into three sections – each section is supposed to be studied in a month's time, and after the completion of the traditional rains-retreat, the ordained student should be ready to exit the monkhood, and return back into the world, with a firm comprehension of Dhamma. The Saṅgīti Sutta lacks this organization – but could be divided or organized similarly to the Navakovāda. Again, the purpose of the discourse is to be wholly memorized – and there is no design-limitation or expiration-date placed on the discourse. Furthermore: there is no intention for the Navakovāda to rescue Buddhism from a schism or disputes over contents; nevertheless – the text and discourse are compared, as they are both recommended by monastic authorities of different calibers, for Buddhist education and in the case of the Navakovāda: the text could be used as a tool to preserve Thai culture. Therefore, seen within that light, the Saṅgīti Sutta would also serve to protect what needs to be learned in monastic culture.

This article won't concern itself with its first section of the Navakovāda, covering the Vinaya, nor the third section concerning Buddhist practices for laypeople - although there are social-ordinances in the Saṅgīti Sutta. The second section is entitled: *Dhamma-Vibhānga*[26] – or *Dhamma Classified*. The sixty-six dhamma-components from the second chapter of

[25] Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirananavarorasa. Navakovāda – Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bhikkhus and Samaneras, Standard Text for the Dhamma Student, 3rd Grade. 5th Impression (Bangkok: Mahamakutara-javidyalaya, 2008), p. i

[26] Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirananavarorasa has a whole separate and expanded similar text - a text used for monastic examinations: Dhamma Vibhāga (Numerical Sayings of Dhamma) (Bangkok: Mahamakut University Press, 1970)

the Navakovāda are classified numerically, but much of the manual for newly ordained Buddhists concerns itself with behavior or selected Dhammas that describe certain characteristics of individuals – as found in the Anguttara-Nikāya, and other divisions of the canonical texts, according to reviewing the sources listed beneath the selections. There are some dhammas selected for the Navakovāda that are not referenced in the Tipiṭaka.[27] The dhamma-components inside the text were selected as tools for social cohesion for someone's life within forms of society. Similar circumstances could be stressed from within the Saṅgīti Sutta; though its numbers annotated below are for the number of times items were used from the discourse.

Textual Enumerations by Respective Arrangement				
TEXT:	**First Division**	**Second Division**	**Third Division**	**Total Number**
Navakovāda	**227**	**66**	**24**	317 Categories
Saṅgīti Sutta	**87**	**140**	**41**	268 Categories*
Note:*	The number could be higher than 230 - some sets were used more than once to illustrate respective points. The Saṅgīti Sutta may become easier to memorize as there are less items to recollect.			

There is no determination to make an obvious distinction between the two texts of discussion. Both the Navakovāda and Saṅgīti Sutta are recommended texts for learning; however, one is implemented across Thailand and neighboring nations – but was not recommended or certified by the Buddha or sanctioned by Buddhist tradition; while the Saṅgīti Sutta – sanctioned by tradition, has been relegated to the back of the collection of long discourses. The Buddha's advice is not being followed.

There was no determination to measure the length of time needed to memorize the discourse – which would be subjected to an individual's ability. One could probably recite it skillfully, in around 30 minutes to an hour. It would seem then, that the Navakovāda would take longer to memorize though as there are many other distinct sets of Dhamma. The following are some important dhamma-components to consider for memorization, which may be absent from one text:

The Navakovāda covers the three characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta – explicitly, whereas the Saṅgīti Sutta forgets to mention the instabilities of impermanence, suffering and not-self – as a threefold set. Additionally, the Navakovāda appears to neglect revealing dependent origination, whereas the Saṅgīti Sutta makes a mention to skillfully knowing dependent origination; and elsewhere, it is only highlighted in dispersed locations that would need reconstructed, assuming someone has knowledge of the dependent origination model. Although it is mentioned, one cannot assemble the parts without knowing exactly what those attributes or links are.

Does the Navakovāda neglect dependent origination? Dependent origination is never mentioned by name. The manual for newly ordained Buddhists does though, expound the second of the Four Noble Truths (the origin of suffering), but only details and rests with three aspects of craving. Later, a section of the manual's text details the five aggregates, alternatively described as: the grouping of the four elements; pleasant, unpleasant, or neither types of sensations; remembering

[27] See, for instance Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirananavarorasa, *Navakovāda – Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bhikkhus and Samaneras, Standard Text for the Dhamma Student, 3rd Grade* (Bangkok: Mahamakuta rajavidyalaya 2000), pp. 46-47: The Four Protective Meditations, referenced from the *Mokkhupāyagātha* of King Mongkut, Rāma IV. Why was this material not cited from the canonical or higher-commentarial material?

what one recognizes through the senses; the arising of Dhammas that may either be wholesome or unwholesome, or neither; and the awareness of sense objects at the moment of contact. All five are summarized as being name-and-form (nāma-rūpa).[28] Therefore, dependent origination is missing as a unit, but its components are dispersed elsewhere – after some laborious searching.

Does the Saṅgīti Sutta ignore the three characteristics common to all sankhāra? Superficially, the Saṅgīti Sutta neglects to mention anicca, dukkha and anatta – but as seen from above, the components are hidden and after laborious searching, as found:

Anicca (impermanence) can be through maintaining beings through nutriment or conditions (without food, one cannot maintain the health of the physical body – thus impermanence; without maintenance, there is decay and death); conversely through the concept of a continued existence – or no rebirth; craving demonstrates impermanence because the feeling stops once the objective is consumed; through becoming – this demonstrates that one's condition changes; suffering is impermanent; the three times are impermanent; impermanence is explicitly mentioned through perceptions making for the maturity of liberation inside the term anicca-saññā and anicce-dukkha-saññā; perceptions that lead to penetration again contain the perceptions of the three various characteristics.

Dukkha (suffering) is found in many of the above components – and explicitly articulated as pain, inherent in formations and subject to change/impermanence.

Anatta is found when illustrating personality belief – taken from the three fetters, along with doubt and attachment to rites and rituals; taken from the 'ends' – which includes the arising and cessation of personality; taken from the five lower fetters, and the higher fetters in the form of conceit - personality-view (sakkāya-diṭṭhī) - twenty identity views are:

- beliefs in: form is self, is possessed by self, is in self; contains self.
- sensation is self, is possessed by self, is in self; contains self.
- perception is self, is possessed by self, is in self; contains self.
- mental formation is self, is possessed by self, is in self; contains self.
- consciousness is self, is possessed by self, is in self; contains self.

In other words, references to clinging, in terms of the aggregates generally refer to: clinging to a doctrine of self. Through clinging to one's personality, one suffers – certainly when even personalities can be impermanent. Those with negative personalities can improve themselves.

When comparing the manual with the discourse, the absences of certain Dhammas weigh far heavier against the Navakovāda, in contrast to the Saṅgīti Sutta. Dependent origination is widely considered to be a very profound and useful Dhamma-set - certainly as a concept for comprehension versus the three characteristics of formations – which is a philosophical element used to gain insightful personal-perspectives. There may be arguments for and against the Navakovāda as a great study-text to be implemented during brief spells of monastic-ordination; however, someone can equally withdraw and organize the material relating to social-ordinances from the Saṅgīti Sutta to learn how to behave in society. As far as the remaining dhamma-sets are concerned, again, this

[28] Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirananavarorasa. Navakovāda – Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bhikkhus and Samaneras, Standard Text for the Dhamma Student, 3rd Grade. (Bangkok: Mahamakutarajavidyalaya, 2000)

endeavor argues that quantitatively Sāriputta's approved discourse has a greater value in terms of purely abhidhammic material available to study. While the Navakovāda is more interested in placing a human within a cultural context, one becomes freer to indulge into the discourse without being forced into the time limitations of the Navakovāda's chapters; whereas the Saṅgīti Sutta is distinguishably educational. One benefit that the Navakovāda possesses is: the first section on the monastic-regulations – which is indeed, officially recommended for daily chanting by Buddhist monastics. The Saṅgīti Sutta has a lesser quantity of items to recollect, and could be stated to be a simpler leading study-text over the later-written, but simplified Navakovāda.

As far as what might be worth spending time learning and what might be the best topics to teach to students of Buddhism in universities: the Sangiti Sutta should be a staple of any course dealing with the Suttanta-Pitaka. Modern Buddhist education reinforces a gradual path of training as the guiding philosophy for educational endeavors – and if the discourse is arranged into items dealing with morality, meditation, and wisdom, even this standard procedure can prevail, while using the discourse.[29] From the time devoted to this study and familiarity with the Saṅgīti Sutta, one may become an advocate for stating that the entire discourse becomes worthy of recollection, since discrepancies between other works have already been illuminated above. The choice of judgment resides with the teacher analyzing the student's ability to comprehend the material. Now, both the Saṅgīti Sutta and the Navakovāda have been compared solely for their functionality as a recommended text for monastic learning – the Saṅgīti Sutta should be easier to recollect.

Additional Commentary:

To again emphasize supporting the return of the Saṅgīti Sutta into Buddhist education, the question was asked: if there was any other possible competing preeminent discourse? Perhaps there was another – the Dasuttara Sutta. Why? In contrast: another of Sāriputta's teachings, the Dasuttara Sutta may seem like an alternative candidate – but this would be a difficult endeavor to undertake as a complete methodology for practicing or understanding Buddhism. The division of ten sets of ten would need to be thematically arranged and the contents connected through editing, as a coherent essay, as done elsewhere.[30] Furthermore, the Dasuttara Sutta is void of the Buddha's approval, although maintained in the tradition – so the Dasuttara Sutta becomes disqualified from being material considered for higher utilization, despite being possibly the root text for a later work, seen below.

Many of the important Dhamma-components found in the Tipiṭaka are present (100 items). The Dasuttara Sutta inspired the creation of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga – The Path of Discrimination* – a canonical text of proto-Abhidhammic construction. Thus, this is another discourse which inspired the creation of another individual abhidhammic-text. Undertaking a deeper applied study of the Dasuttara Sutta would only benefit any practitioner interested in the Buddhadhamma; but the Dasuttara Sutta is not a complete system of understanding as the Saṅgīti Sutta is – as anyone can determine as they undertake an examination of both discourses.

---

[29] For an example of how this can be accomplished, see: Dion Oliver Peoples: Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta (Wangnoi: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2012)

[30] See, Dr. Dion Oliver Peoples: Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta (Wangnoi: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2012)

Again, after the comprehensive examination of the abhidhammic materials, there is no validation for the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* as a perfect text. In brief, what is wrong with the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*? The findings again, follow (based on the English translation by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli[31]): it is agreed that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* seems like a textual-trend in the formation of Buddhist texts – certainly of those that may be based from a single discourse. Many of the examined texts analyzed from translations or from what other scholars have mentioned (backed by investigative inquiries from translated volumes of the Tipiṭaka), throughout, have been assembled after the death of the Dasabala – and that many other non-Theravāda traditions have texts with similarities (certainly the Sarvāstivādins, as examined earlier). Dhammajoti suggested: "The staunch Vaibhāṣika, Saṃghabhadra, in an attempt to establish the Buddha's omniscience, cites the Sarvāstivāda version of the *Saṅgīti-sūtra*, where the Buddha is supposed to have predicted that there will be contentious views within the Buddhist movement after Him (the Theravāda version has Sāriputta speaking – so here highlights a discrepancy!). These views are not to be found in the extant Chinese Āgama or Pāli version of the sūtra, but they are doctrinal positions considered heterodox…"[32] Some differing views follow:

Nārada claims that the Sutta Piṭaka is the *conventional teachings* of the Dasabala and that the Abhidhamma Piṭaka is the *ultimate teachings* of the Dasabala[33] – but there is nothing mentioned concerning the textual arrangement of the material, and from the Anupada Sutta - one can see many principles already.[34]

[31] Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (translator): The Path of Discrimination – Paṭisambhidāmagga (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1997), III-177, p. 174 – the tradition of Theravāda Buddhism believes that the Buddha is omniscient, the Buddha though has stated otherwise, for himself. Who do we believe: the Buddha or the tradition? Later, in the next citation, we can see another tradition tried to establish the omniscience of the Buddha. They use some faulty logic and make mere attributions, per page 174: "He is the discoverer (bujjhitar) of the actualities, thus he is enlightened. He is the awakener (bodhetar) of the generation, thus he is enlightened. He is enlightened by omniscience, enlightened by seeing all, enlightened without dependence on others' instruction, enlightened by majesty... He is enlightened because he has destroyed unenlightenment and obtained enlightenment." This is clearly discounted in the Majjhima-Nikāya's Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta (#71) – the Buddha states: "...those who say thus do not say what has been said by me, but misrepresent me with what is untrue and contrary to fact." - Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (Wisdom Publications: Boston, MA 1995), pp. 578-588

[32] Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti: Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Center of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2007), p. 65 – this is also the opinion found inside the Paṭisambhidāmagga, see above.

[33] Nārada Mahā Thera: A Manual of Abhidhamma being Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Bhadanta Anuruddācariya (Colombo/Jakarta: Buddhist Publication Society, 1968, reprinted: 1979), p. i

[34] Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (Wisdom Publications: Boston, MA 1995) Sutta #111, pp. 899-902, a summary/review: After the two weeks it took the secluded Sāriputta to become an Arahant, the Dasabala proclaimed in the Anupada Sutta: Sāriputta has great, wide, joyous, quick, keen, penetrative wisdom – with insights into states one-by-one as the occurred. There definitely is a systematic representation of the effort exerted above and in the explanation of the details pertaining to Sāriputta's accomplishments. The discourse moves immediately into a very detailed explanation of the Four Jhāna's. Some people may question the authenticity of this discourse as originating from the Dasabala. When one reads the text, it seems like the discourse might be an early teaching purposely legitimizing Sāriputta as skillful for the disciples of the Dasabala and further details the primary meditation technique promulgated by the Dasabala. Sāriputta's confirmation of the Dasabala's teaching not only benefits the Chief Disciple, but additionally demonstrates the truths of the Dasabala's Enlightenment and both men's Arahant attainments. Concerning the Abhidhamma - in the First Jhāna, Sāriputta determined: applied and sustained thought, rapture, pleasure, unification of mind, contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind, zeal, decisions, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention – all of these arising, present, and disappearance – and being unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, freed, dissociated, with a mind freed from barriers – he realized an escape beyond and cultivated that attainment to confirm that there is such (a second jhāna level)… Sāriputta in fact confirmed all of the Dasabala's jhāna-attainments through his own escape-beyond experience as recollected by Ānanda. As the discourse

The Abhidhammattha Sangaha[35] and Saṅgīti Sutta contain several similar sets of Dhamma. Is it possible that Mrs. Rhys Davids did not make the connection with the Saṅgīti Sutta in her preface to Anuruddha's Abhidhammattha-Sangaha? She writes: "...and in this Compendium we see a famous and venerable digest of that more abstract, analytical, advanced teaching which the Buddhists called Abhidhamma, or 'ultra-doctrine,' wherein the narrative and the homily of the Suttanta discourses found no place." Nowhere, does she cite the Saṅgīti Sutta, but asserts her own understanding to acknowledge only the recognized Abhidhamma texts. Is she claiming that the Saṅgīti Sutta held no value for the creation of Abhidhamma? The current research shows otherwise and does not ignore the root-discourse from the Suttanta-piṭaka. Likewise: Bhikkhu Bodhi does not reference the Saṅgīti Sutta either, but mentions the mātikā or matrix (table of contents) of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī as the preface to the Abhidhamma Piṭaka[36] – which was already mentioned to be similar to the sets of twos from the Saṅgīti Sutta. These two prominent Buddhist scholars have not gone to the roots of the Abhidhamma systems or made the ancient connection publically.

The step before the Saṅgīti Sutta would be to find which discourses each of the dhamma-components are found inside, if this is indeed fully possible[37] – but, indeed, the focal-point of this current endeavor is the Saṅgīti Sutta. This endeavor has repeatedly emphasized and argues that the Saṅgīti Sutta serves as the basis for several Abhidhamma works in different traditions – and perhaps a lot of negligent Buddhist literature needs rescrutinized, following this endeavor. This is a major fact and presentation that can no longer be ignored.

Although the Saṅgīti Sutta is not arranged as an Abhidhamma treatise, any effort to categorize the Dhammas can lead someone to justify the Saṅgīti Sutta as a very important or significant discourse found in the Tipiṭaka in terms of its intentive content, and for its substantial role or ability to create an individual Buddhist sect – the arguments for such possibilities and comparisons have already been shown in the section pertaining to Sarvāstivādins. The Buddhist world has seen many classical commentators elaborate and arrange the teachings of the discourse to produce long-lasting material that has influenced many Buddhist students.

The effort to comprehend the Saṅgīti Sutta's Dhamma-sets solely rests with the student – no explanations are found in the text of the discourse (this could be determined to be the only weakness in the discourse as preserved), although there are claims that the Saṅgīti-paryāya of the Sarvāstivādins fills this void; the Theravāda's Vibhaṅga and Dhammasaṅgaṇī (which replaced the Saṅgīti-paryāya)

nears conclusion is: perhaps someone in the Sangha was doubting Sāriputta's abilities or attainments (having only been ordained for two weeks); the Anupada Sutta puts the question to rest.

[35] See the above footnote, and in the possession of the scholar are other recent versions: Mrs. Rhys Davids (revised and edited) – Compendium of Philosophy (A Translation Now Made for the First Time from the Original Pāli of the Abhidhammattha-Sangaha, with Introductory Essay and Notes by Shwe Zan Aung) (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1995); Bhikkhu Bodhi (general editor): Abhidhammattha-Sangaha – A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (originally edited & translated by Mahāthera Nārada; with suggestions by U Rewata Dhamma, but later revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi,) (Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society Pariyatti Editions 1999); R.P. Wijeratne and Rupert Gethin (translators): Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha by Anuruddha) & Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī) by Sumaṅgala, being a commentary to Anuruddha's Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Lancaster, Pāli Text Society, 2007) – *Therefore, the scholar has four versions of the same basic text to work from and compare.*

[36] Bhikkhu Bodhi (general editor): Abhidhammattha-Sangaha – A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society Pariyatti Editions 1999), p. 7

[37] Indeed, and see where this was achieved: Dr. Dion Oliver Peoples: Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta (Wangnoi: Mahachula longkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2012)

are other candidates. To fulfill this, now, would be detrimental to the understanding of the discourse, and turn this work into an understanding or interpretation of Buddhist Dhamma – similar to the various Abhidhamma books mentioned previously.

Analysis derived from Secondary Literature:

Several ancient and modern texts were examined in this chapter to determine the value of Sāriputta's teaching of the Saṅgīti Sutta. There is proof that at least two schools of Buddhism have utilized the Saṅgīti Sutta towards constructing their systems of Abhidhamma. Here, though, are some additional concluding remarks, as again, Dhammajoti suggested: "The staunch Vaibhāṣika, Saṃghabhadra, in an attempt to establish the Buddha's omniscience, cites the Sarvāstivāda version of the *Saṅgīti-sūtra*, where the Buddha is supposed to have predicted that there will be contentious views within the Buddhist movement after Him. These views are not to be found in the extant Chinese Āgama or Pāli version of the *sūtra*, but they are doctrinal positions considered heterodox…"[38] The Theravāda version has the Venerable Sāriputta stating the above proclamation pertaining to the need to protect the doctrine. Here the two Buddhist schools differ! Later schools would arise anyway, ironically rooted from the analysis of the very contents of the discourse designed to unify Buddhist disciples into one system of understanding. Nārada claims that the Sutta Piṭaka is the conventional teachings of the Dasabala and that the Abhidhamma Piṭaka is the ultimate teachings of the Dasabala[39] – but there is nothing mentioned concerning the textual arrangement of the material.[40] There does not need to be a discussion about the arrangement of material, but the material should have some systematic presentation for the fostering of comprehension.

As far as Theravāda Buddhism is concerned: the Abhidhammattha Sangaha and Saṅgīti Sutta contain several similar sets of Dhamma. Although the Saṅgīti Sutta is not arranged as an Abhidhamma treatise, any effort to categorize and elaborate on Dhammas can lead one to argue for and justify the Saṅgīti Sutta as perhaps, the most important or significant discourse found in the Tipiṭaka in terms of content alone, as already demonstrated through comparing the contents with other respected texts, and the creation of these ancient texts still preserved and used in Buddhist traditions.

The Saṅgīti Sutta contains most of the information found in the various Abhidhamma texts, or their table of contents[41] – as already evident though the charted illustrations above, although

[38] Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti: Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Center of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2007), p. 65

[39] Nārada Mahā Thera: A Manual of Abhidhamma being Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Bhadanta Anuruddācariya (Colombo/Jakarta: Buddhist Publication Society, 1968, reprinted: 1979), p. i

[40] Please examine: the Anupada Sutta – which may propose potential abhidhammic principles already – to illustrate this potential from critics claiming Abhidhamma material is not derived from the collections of discourses.

[41] Hirakawa Akira (translated by Paul Groner): A History of Indian Buddhism (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), pp. 140-141: "At the beginning of the Pāli Abhidhamma work entitles the Dhammasaṅgaṇī is a section call the Abhidhamma-mātikā... These lists are followed by a supplementary list of forty-two twofold topics. The process by which these mātikā were chosen, by members of the Theravāda School is not clear, but of the forty-two twofold topics listed in the Suttantika-abhidhamma, thirty-one are also included in a list of thirty-three topics found in a sutta, the Saṅgītisuttanta... Since the order of the designations listed in the two works is very close, the list of dhammas in the Saṅgītisuttanta apparently provided the basis for the mātikā. ...This sutra eventually influenced the Sarvāstivāda abhidharma treatise, the Saṅgītiparyāya." Furthermore, Akira writes that the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment comprise a mātikā for additional Sarvāstivāda & Mulasarvāstivādin schools.

one might suggest that the material presented is in mātikā form, as an outline with nothing explained. A venture was taken into the literature pertaining to the Sarvāstivādins, and several texts received illumination. Again, the Sarvāstivāda literature seems as old as Theravāda texts - although Sarvāstivāda Abhidhamma texts have characteristics of being ancient works, possibly originating, if not from Sāriputta himself, then from close generations of his disciples. However, Theravāda Abhidhamma must have been familiar with their work or vice-versa – due to the *Points of Controversy* text – where points of contention are worked out until the solution is found and the opposing doctrine is refuted.

The section on the Navakovāda may just illuminate biases based on historical education methods or philosophies found in different cultures. The bias suggests using the officially sanctioned material for recollection or study; in this case: the monastic regulations and the Saṅgīti Sutta, over anything established by politically influential people. Taken together though, one would get an extensive amount of social-regulations and dhamma-sets – but a student could decipher contents based on their specialized need.

The research gleamed from this article suggests and determines this discourse is, educationally, the most important Theravāda Buddhist scriptures, based on the derivative concepts that can arise from critically examining this teaching of Sāriputta (as approved by the Buddha). Again, the Saṅgīti Sutta is a proto-Abhidhamma text that allows for additional developments, the evidence is in the foundation of later written texts. Reciting this information encourages the development of Buddhist intelligence. This demonstrates and defends the discourse as the most preeminent discourse available for Theravāda Buddhists. No other discourse details all of the collective material found in the Saṅgīti Sutta, although another, the Dasuttara Sutta, attempts a thematic arrangement. While the case for returning the Saṅgīti Sutta back into prominence has been suggested here, next is a presentation of the Mahayana abhidharma literature.

Examining Mahayana Abhidharma Systems:

Nagarjuna's Mūlamādhyamikakārikā is used for the Madyāmika system, and Asaṅga's Yogācārabhūmiśāstra is used for the Yogacarins – and these are said to be the equivalent to the Theravada and Sarvāstivādin abhidhamma-systems.[42] The Abhidharmasamuccaya is a consolidation of all of Asaṅga's Mahāyāna views related to Abhidharma. After reading the Abhidharmasamuccaya, one can assert that it is of remarkable complexity, and very similar to material that can be found in the Theravada and Sarvāstivādin systems, with a few exceptions, most notable: the inclusion of advice from the Mahāyānābhidharma Sūtra – a discourse conceived in a dream of Asaṅga.[43]

[42] Walpola Rahula & Sara Boin-Webb: Abhidharmasamuccaya: The Compendium of the Higher Teaching (Philosophy) by Asaṅga (Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, 2001), p. xviii

[43] The actual wording here is that the Future Buddha – the Bodhisattva Maitreya, came down to Asanga during the night, and would discuss matters with him, or that Asanga would ascend to Tusita Heaven to learn from Maitreya. See: Walpola Rahula & Sara Boin-Webb: Abhidharmasamuccaya: The Compendium of the Higher Teaching (Philosophy) by Asaṅga (Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, 2001), p. xii-xiii – thus very likely: this all occurred in the man's dream or meditative states – when he was contemplating Dharmas.

For the sake of this article, only the general contents of the texts were looked at, and although the entire bulk of the contents were examined quickly – nothing immediate was raised as a topic for alarmed inquiry. Two charts follow to illustrate their content – and again, when judged against the Saṅgīti Sutta, we can get further evidence that the root text to all of this being discussed here, needs to be included into Buddhist university research.

The Mahayana works urge the stressing of lokuttara-concepts, but all of these are ever-present in Theravada teachings - but whereas the Mahayana system expounds on this issues to a curious extent, the Theravadans don't necessarily pursue these doctrinal aims.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">A Look at the Abhidharmasamuccaya[44]</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Laksanasamuccaya – Compendium of Characteristics</td><td>Three Dharmas</td><td>Five Aggregates, Eighteen Elements, Twelve Spheres (āyatanas) – asking the meanings of many terms – helpful like a glossary</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Division of Aspects (Grouping)</td><td>Like the Dhātukathā, this examines the aggregates, elements and spheres from sixty points of view: its substance and designation, conventional and ultimate, conditioned and unconditioned, worldly and transcendental, time and space, conditioned origination, etc – to show that there is no-self in these categories.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Classifies the aggregates, elements and spheres in terms of: characteristics, elements, types, states, associations, space, time, partial, complete, mutual, and absolute</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conjunction</td><td>Examines the physical and mental phenomena as combinations in various circumstances and conditions in different realms – with the objective of demonstrating that the conjunction and disjunction of things are only in the mind and that the notion of the self feels, perceives, wishes, remembers – is false.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Accompaniment</td><td>Examines beings with regard to their seeds (bīja) [where someone was born] in the three realms with regard to their mastery of worldly and transcendental virtues and their good, bad or neutral practice – which leads to disassociation</td></tr>
<tr style="display:none"><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Viniścayasamuccaya – Compendium of Determining</td><td rowspan="4">Four Noble Truths</td><td>Truth of Suffering</td></tr>
<tr><td>Origin of Suffering</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cessation of Suffering</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Path of Preparation
• Path of Application
• Path of Vision
• Path of Mental Development
• Path of Perfection</td></tr>
<tr><td>Determining Dharmas (Teaching)</td><td>Discourse, verse narration, exposition, stanza, solemn utterance, circumstance, exploits, ‘thus it was said’, birth stories, development, marvels, instruction</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Determining Acquisitions</td><td>Definition of Individuals: character, release, receptacle, application, result, realm and career</td></tr>
<tr><td>Definition of Comprehension: Comprehension of the Dharma, Comprehension of the meaning, Comprehension of reality, later comprehension, comprehension of the Jewels, comprehension of the stopping of wandering in Samsara, final comprehension, comprehension of the disciples, comprehension of the Pratyekabuddhas, comprehsion of the bodhisattvas</td></tr>
<tr><td>Determining Dialectic</td><td>Ways of determining meaning, ways of explaining a Sutra, ways of analytical demonstration, ways of treating questions, ways of determining according to groups, ways of determining a talk or controversy (logic), ways of determining the profound and hidden meanings of certain Sutra passages.</td></tr>
</table>

[44] According to the Introduction to Walpola Rahula & Sara Boin-Webb: Abhidharmasamuccaya: The Compendium of the Higher Teaching (Philosophy) by Asaṅga (Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, 2001), p. xviii-xxvi

A Look at the Abhidharmakosabhasyam[45]		
Chapter One: The Dhatus	Homage to the Buddha	Three Qualities of a Buddha
	Definition of Abhidharma, Definition of Abhidharmakosa, Purpose of the Abhidharma, Authors of Abhidharma	
	Division of the Dharmas; The Five Skandas, Twelve Ayatanas, and Eighteen Dhatus; Threefold Classificaiton of the Dharmas; Some Problems Raised by the Threefold Classification; Classification of the Dharmas in the Eighteen Dhatus; Subsidiary Discussions (organs, etc)	
Chapter Two: The Indriyas	Indriyas; Twenty-two Indriyas; Mental States; Dharmas not Associated with the Mind; Six Causes; Four Conditions;	
Chapter Three: The World	Living Beings and the Physical World; The Variety of Sentient Beings & Their Transmigration; Dependent Origination and Transmigration; Lifespan and Death of Senient Beings; Physical World & the Size and Lifespans of Sentient Beings; The Dimensions of Time and Space & the Cosmic Cycle	
Chapter Four: Karma	Karma (including a long section on the various types of discipline); Karma as Taught in Various Scriptures; The Courses of Action; Karma and its Results; Karma as Taught in the Commentaries; The Bodhisattva; Three Meritorious Actions; Miscellaneous Discussions	
Chapter Five: The Latent Defilements	The Anuśayas; The Ninety-eight Anuśayas; Miscellaneous Discussions on the Defilements; The Abandoning of Defilements	
Chapter Six: The Path and the Saints	The Nature of the Path; The Four Noble Truths; The Path of Seeing: Preliminary Practices; The Path of Seeing; The Aśaikṣa Path; The Various Paths	
Chapter Seven: The Knowledges	The Relationship Between the Patiences, the Knowledges, and Seeing; The Characteristics of the Ten Knowledges; The Aspects of Ten Knowledges; The Ten Knowledges: An Analysis; The Eighteen Qualities unique to a Buddha; Qualities the Buddhas have in Common with Ordinary Persons and with Saints;	
Chapter Eight: The Absorptions	General Introduction: covers the Four Dyanas, Four Arupyas, etc.; and Concluding Remarks	
Chapter Nine: Refutation of the Pudgala	General Statements; Refutation of the Vātsīputrīya Theories; Refutation of the Soul Theory of the Grammarians; Refutation of the Soul Theories of the Vaiśeṣikas	

[45] Louis de La Vallée Poussin & Leo M. Pruden: Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991) – in Four Volumes & David Patt: Elucidating the Path to Liberation: A Study of the Commentary on the Abhidharmakosa by the First Dalai Lama (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1993), p. 9: "…the Kośa represents the culmination of only one stream or lineage that was participating in this process… The Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa holds a place of equal significance for the Theravādin tradition."

To summarize these two charts, dealing with the Mahayana Abhidharma systems: it is quite apparent, beyond the differences of being rooted in Sanskrit, that: the borrowing of common material was beyond evident. Index the items. There is a chart to follow this paragraph that allows for the indexing. There are little differences between the systems of abhidhamma/abhidharma. Perhaps the questions, asked by different scholars determined the differences in the perceptions that created the texts, and the distances and lack of communication between the various sects allots for the differences in the development of the systems. If there was any effort at a synchronistic method of higher processes to be examined – it was accomplished here to a very limited extent, and could be further engaged by very capable students interested in unifying Buddhist philosophical views. In a sense, the framework is provided: one can provide an index of common themes in a column, and the title of the works in the upper row – and check off the items if the work contains that issue. Then students can be certain for themselves that the various Buddhist traditions have certain commonalities between them. To begin with, the student might produce something like this:

A Synchronistic Method of Higher Processes								
INDEXED ITEMS (incomplete data – recommendation for a student to compare all the content)	**Saṅgīti Sutta**	**Saṅgīti-Paryāya** (incomplete)	**Jñānaprasthāna**	**Dharmaskandhas**	**Abhidhammattha-Sangaha**	**Abhidharmasamuccaya**	**Abhidharmakosabhasyam**	**Vibhanga:** Analysis of Small Items
…230. (and so forth, as necessary)								

Students should examine all the various texts, and make some itemized annotations, to determine the viewpoints on the various indexed items. University students of Buddhist studies can benefit from this identification of unification or diversification of views in order to properly comprehend any trends that have developed historically. This data compilation could not be performed adequately, regretfully, for this conference paper, with limited time for publication – so the effort was scrapped. Certainly, the chart can be expanded, potentially, to account for more titles and more indexed items, as the student determines to be appropriate for one's study or examination.

Conclusion:

This brief study of the various abhidhamma/abhidharma systems proves that there are many commonalities that exist in these schools of Buddhism, and it is more than evident to proclaim that the variances are due to the distant Sanghas remaining out of contact with each other, respectfully for reasons of difference, culture, language and other trivialities. There is proof in our modern classrooms that the systems can greet and dialogue with each other. The future of a stronger Buddhism may rest with the next and subsequent generations of Buddhists who can see through the sectarianisms and get back to Buddhism. Taking a look at our abhidhammas or abhidharmas – expounding on what concerns the dhamma or dharma will greatly fulfill our professions as Buddhists.

While it is true that several criteria of Dhamma or Dharma are very different in the three main systems of Buddhism, communication between the schools is highly important. For instance, if someone is discussing the Triple Gem in the context of the Theravada system, but another system is discussing the Three Roots: of a lama, tutelary deity (patron protector of a certain place of lineage) that transmits knowledge or deeper principles of the self (akin, thus to Dhamma), and the protector (like a dead member of the Sangha, such as: Dorje Shugden). Through scrutiny, can determine that these are no different from aspects of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha – despite the guise or layers of cloaking that the terminology is rendered in. Here though, in this article, we have been synchronistic towards the higher processes of the mind, for the benefit of others.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

A.K. Warder: Indian Buddhism 3rd Edition (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers 2004)

Bhikkhu Bodhi (general editor): Abhidhammattha-Sangaha – A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (originally edited & translated by Mahāthera Nārada; with suggestions by U Rewata Dhamma, but later revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi) (Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society Pariyatti Editions 1999)

Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti: Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Center of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2007)

Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (translator): The Path of Discrimination – Paṭisambhidāmagga (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1997)

Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (Wisdom Publications: Boston, MA 1995)

Charles Willemen: Kumārajīva on Abhidharma from Mahachulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies (MJBS) Volume I, 2008 (Bangkok: MCU Press, 2008)

David Patt: Elucidating the Path to Liberation: A Study of the Commentary on the Abhidharmakosa by the First Dalai Lama (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1993)

Dion Oliver Peoples: "Reflections on Social Ethics in Buddhist Old-World Stories" - http://www.iabuconference.com/seminar_detail.php?smt_id=17

Dion Oliver Peoples: Chanting the Saṅgīti Sutta (Wangnoi: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2012)

Edward Muller: The Dhammasaṅgaṇī (London: Pāli Text Society 1978); Pāli Chanting with Translations (Nakornpathom: Mahāmakutrājavidyālaya Press 2001/2544)

Hajime Nakamura: Indian Buddhism – A Survey with Bibliographical Notes (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007)

Hirakawa Akira (translated by Paul Groner): A History of Indian Buddhism (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3AHinayana/Archive_2

Junjiro Takakusu: "The Abhidharma Literature of the Sarvāstivādins" from Journal of the Pāli Text Society, Volume V 1897-1907: 1904-1905

Louis de La Vallée Poussin & Leo M. Pruden: Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991) [Four Volumes]

Mrs. Rhys Davids (revised and edited): Compendium of Philosophy (A Translation Now Made for the First Time from the Original Pāli of the Abhidhammattha-Sangaha, with Introductory Essay and Notes by Shwe Zan Aung) (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1995)

Nārada Mahā Thera: A Manual of Abhidhamma being Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Bhadanta Anuruddācariya (Colombo/Jakarta: Buddhist Publication Society, 1968, reprinted: 1979)

Pathamakyaw Ashin Thittila: The Book of Analysis – Vibhaṅga (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2002)

Phra Rajaworakhun Jaowatgittimsak (Saiyut Pannasaro): Nangsuu Suatmon Wat Patumwanaram-rajaworavihara. (Bangkok: Wat Patumwanaram Rajaworavihara, 2546) (in Pāli/Thai)

R.P. Wijeratne and Rupert Gethin (translators): Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha by Anuruddha) & Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī) by Sumaṅgala, being a commentary to Anuruddha's Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma (Lancaster, Pāli Text Society, 2007)

Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids: Points of Controversy or Subjects of Discourse: being A Translation of the Kathā-Vatthu from the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, (London: Pāli Text Society, 1969)

Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirananavarorasa: *Navakovāda – Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bhikkhus and Samaneras, Standard Text for the Dhamma Student, 3rd Grade* (Bangkok: Mahamakutarajavidyalaya 2000)

Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirananavarorasa: Navakovāda – Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bhikkhus and Samaneras, Standard Text for the Dhamma Student, 3rd Grade. (Bangkok: Mahamakutarajavidyalaya, 2000)

Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirananavarorasa: Dhamma Vibhāga (Numerical Sayings of Dhamma) (Bangkok: Mahamakut University Press, 1970)

Walpola Rahula & Sara Boin-Webb: Abhidhamrasamuccaya: The Compendium of the Higher Teaching (Philosophy) by Asaṅga (Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, 2001)

The Roots of Interbeing: Buddhist Revival in Vietnam

Angela Dietrich[1]

Introduction

To renowned Buddhologist Heinz Bechert, Buddhist modernism was a manifestation of religious revivalism applied to the context of post-colonial society, bearing the following features which are relevant for the current discussion, amongst others: (1) an emphasis on Buddhism as a philosophy, rather than a creed or a religion; (2) an emphasis on 'activism' and setting great store by social work; (3) the claim by modernists that Buddhism has always included a social component described as a philosophy of equality…and that a Buddhist society must be democratic; (4) the emergence of Buddhist nationalism; (5) a strong tendency towards the reassertion of women's rights in contemporary Buddhism and attempts and actions taken to restore the order of nuns; (6) the emergence of a new type of Buddhist syncretism, viz., the combination of various Buddhist traditions (comp. 213-214, Bechert's Obituary, 2011).

Particularly the last point concerns us here, as discussed by Stephen Batchelor when he cites instances of a 'reinvigorated Buddhism' which emerged with a protestant, rationalist flavour, in response to both the challenges posed by Christian missionaries in post-colonial Asian societies, coupled with those of the secular, rational and scientific culture of the West (p. 345).

Vietnamese Buddhism is an excellent example of such a 'reinvigorated Buddhism', especially, for the present purposes, as articulated by the emergence of UBCV. Batchelor alleges that this was "…the first time such a feat of reconciliation (of various Buddhist views) has ever been achieved". In this development, Buddhism was identified as a focus for nationalism offering a grass roots alternative to the competing ideologies of capitalism and communism (ibid, p.357). Far from being an isolated response, however, Batchelor views it in the context of similar displays of Buddhist modernism occurring, for instance, in China with Taixu's reforms, in Japan with the Nichiren revivals, and in Burma, with its strong Buddhist resistance to British colonialism (p.360). Batchelor's estimation of the emergence of the UBCV at this juncture of Vietnamese history is undoubtedly based on Thich Nhat Hanh's own rendition as articulated in his tract *Vietnam: The Lotus in the Sea of Fire*: "Although Southern Buddhism is practised by a minority in Vietnam, it performed an outstanding feat, unmatched anywhere else in the world, when it joined hands with Northern Buddhism in a Unified Church...It may well serve as an example for a Unified Buddhist Church in the future" (1967, p.13).

Aspects Of The Historical Development Of Vietnamese Buddhism

To trace the roots of Vietnamese Buddhism it is instructive to briefly examine its historical development. Although Buddhism in Vietnam is believed to have dated from the first century

[1] I hope I will be forgiven for not using diacritic marks when citing words in Vietnamese. This is due entirely to the limitations of my PC's keyboard.

AD, by the end of the following century, records attest to the existence of a 'flourishing Buddhist community' which appeared to have been Theravada (comp. Thich Thien An, p.22). Thich Quang Lien states that Vietnam, due to the existence of trade routes throughout the region from the earliest period, enjoyed a fruitful contact with both China and India in equal measure (com. p.32). However, Chinese Buddhism gradually gained ascendency especially as Vietnam was subjected to nearly a thousand years of Chinese rule in the course of which the country became a province of China (603 – 939 C.E.). This ushered in Daoism and Confucianism, too, the latter serving as a model of governance and administration for the entire dynastic period, and the former undoubtedly having inspired the tradition of Zen-inspired poetry cited below. However, Thich Quang Lien opines that "Among them Buddhism was the only religion which spread throughout the country" (ibid, p.37).

Chinese Buddhism's influence eventually culminated in a flourishing of Buddhist civilisation (similarly to the T'ang dynasty in China) during the four Vietnamese dynasties of the Earlier Le, Ly, Tran and the Later Le (980 - 1400). This period was notable as an era of relative peace and stability, with the Ly (1010 – 1225) in particular representing the apex of the development of not only the religion itself, but Buddhist arts, architecture and education. As suggested by Thich Quang Lien, the monarchies were enabled to promote Buddhism (along with Daoism and Confucianism) on the basis of ensuring the prosperity of the country through the construction of dykes to further irrigation and rice cultivation. In summing up this era, this author states "(The influence of) Buddhism… (was) increasing (in the) affairs of state and society. All three dynasties (i.e., Le, Ly, Tran) witnessed the construction not only of dykes, but roads, fleets, fortification, parks, palaces and temples… Buddhist education and culture, literature and art (all flourished)." The fall of the Tran, however, to the Nguyen dynasty led to a civil war over five decades so that the 17th century ushered in a decline in Buddhism and the division of the country into north and south, leaving it open to occupation by the French colonial power (comp. 41 – 44). However, prior to that, the founder of the Tran dynasty, the ruling monarch Tran Thai Ton who became known as the Great Monk King, had a distinguished career, according to Thich Thien An, both in a religious and secular sense. He is notable for having written several significant Buddhist tracts including *Lessons in the Void, A Guide to Zen Buddhism* and a *Commentary on The Diamond Sutra*, besides having been an accomplished poet as follows:

Wind striking the pine trees, moon lighting the garden;

This feeling, these pictures, and the melancholy –

Who knows the Zen spirit is there,

Awakened through the long night, abiding with the monk.

(125 – 126).

Of all the Mahayana orders introduced into Vietnam, many historians believe it was Zen, as can be seen in the above, that resonated the most with the Vietnamese: "…Zen most thoroughly permeated the practise of Vietnamese Buddhism, and its doctrines and methods of teaching, though somewhat nominal today, have continued to exert a creative influence moulding the Vietnamese Buddhist character" (Thich Thien An,p. 23).

Zen was introduced into Vietnam in 580 C.E. by the Indian Dharma Master Ven. Vinitaruci who had entered the country from China and established the first Zen school, followed by

the second Zen school some 250 years later, founded by a Chinese monk. However, it was only the establishment of the third Zen school which was considered uniquely 'Vietnamese' embodying the fusion of Zen (Vietnamese: *Thien*) and Pure Land (*Tinh Do*), having arrived in Vietnam from China in the early 11th century, which set the actual tone for its subsequent development (comp. ibid, 125 – 126). This is further elaborated by Thich Quang Lien: "According to Vietnamese Buddhists, when *Karuna* and *Prajna* are united we notice that little distinction is made between the self-power teaching of Zen and the other-power teaching of the Pure Land school and that although most monks and laymen belong to the *Lam-Te* (C. *Linchi* and J. *Rinzai*) tradition, they practice Pure Land *Niem Phat* (C. *Nien fo*, J. *Nembutsu*) as well as *Koan* meditation, a unification of teachings characteristic of Chinese Buddhism during the late T'ang and Song dynasties introduced to Vietnam through the *Thao-Du'one* school…images of Sakyamuni and Amitabha are (thus) found in every Vietnamese Mahayana Buddhist temple" (comp. 101-104, p.186). Thich Nhat Hanh also adds: "Except for the pure Zen monasteries, almost every pagoda in Vietnam practises this combination of Zen and Pure Land" (1967, p.15).

When it came to the establishment of 'pure Zen Buddhism', Thich Thien An states "The expansion of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam, especially in the North during the Tran dynasty (1225 – 1400), was due in large part to the Truc Lam (Bamboo Grove Zen) school which…developed and prospered under the leadership of (the first patriarch) King Tran Nhan Ton, his successor, Thich Phap Loa, and finally Thich Huyen Quang...(who) established a registration book for the sangha, built numerous monasteries, and compiled various Buddhist texts…For these reasons the first three patriarchs of the Truc Lam school stand out as the most prominent Buddhist leaders in Vietnamese history" (comp. 135-136, p.147). Thich Huyen Quang, (who was selected by the king on the basis of his exceptional exam results to officiate as ambassador to China and as governor of the National Academy), expressed his yearning to renounce worldliness in favour of a Zen-inspired life in the following poem:

> Wealth and fame: how slow and difficult!
>
> While days flow like water
>
> And old age rushes toward you.
>
> Why not meditate alone, near a brook,
>
> In some far-off mountain,
>
> Lying on a board in the pine forest wind,
>
> A cup of tea waiting?
>
> (ibid, p.134)

Vietnamese Buddhist Revivalism

Commenting on the discourse surrounding Vietnamese Buddhism, T.U.T Anh opines that Vietnamese Buddhism must be viewed as *composite* in nature. He differentiates this from *syncretistic*, adopting Richard Gombrich's argument that the concept of syncretism may not be useful for analysing variations in Buddhism especially in the area of soteriology, as he indicates that many

Buddhists in fact believe that only Buddha Dharma can lead to liberation, despite the incorporation of elements of folk religion into their belief system (comp. Gombrich, 1988, quoted by Anh, p.114). Anh states that although the masses have always tended more towards devotional (specifically Pure Land inspired) forms of practice, "…Zen in Vietnam stems from efforts of the elites eager to bring orthodoxy to Vietnamese Buddhism" (ibid, p.113). This is corroborated in part by Thich Nhat Hanh's account when he states: "The small village pagoda often does not have a well-qualified Zen master as such because most people, and in particular the villagers cannot practise Zen as taught in the monastery. This must be performed by monks or possibly a few educated laymen. For this reason popular Buddhism in Vietnam is a mixture of some basic Zen elements and many practices of the Pure Land sect (*Amidism)*, which is a sect of Mahayana Buddhism that is very popular among the masses" (1967, p.14).

A composite form of Buddhism in Vietnam has, in McHale's opinion, always been inclusive, impregnated with popular beliefs and practices (comp. p.146). This is perhaps not surprising especially when viewed against the background of the striking diversity of religious expression per se in Vietnam, in particular, the syncretistic movements found in South Vietnam unparalleled in the entire Southeast Asian region, mostly emerging in the early 1900s and with a pronounced engaged dimension. This included Buddhist revitalisation movements, notable amongst which is the Hoa Hao, with its emphasis on ritual simplicity, in aiding the poor and needy, and dispensing with wasteful expenditure on ceremonies, offerings and pagoda construction. According to Philip Taylor, this modernist tendency had already become manifest in the 1800s during the Nguyen Dynasty as Gia Long, the first Nguyen king, issued a proclamation decrying the excessive expenditure on rituals in North Vietnam (comp. p. 31). Taylor, in his collection of essays, specifically in his own chapter, 'The Quest for Modernity', seeks to demonstrate the vibrancy and diversity of religion in Vietnam against the background of a more general upsurge of religiosity in the modern world. As regards Buddhism in particular, he states: "A Buddhist revival emerged in the early 1920s as a nation-wide movement aiming to stem the perceived decline in Buddhism by returning to scriptural tenets, the dissemination of key Buddhist texts and commentaries in the Vietnamese language, an attempt to institutionalise a unified Buddhism and involve the laity in Buddhist associations and for passionate social action" (ibid,p.22).

Elise DeVido in her contribution to Taylor's volume describes the Vietnamese Buddhist revival being characterised by 'Buddhism for this world' (comp. p.250). Placing the years of revival from 1920 to 1951, (it) established the foundations of mainstream Buddhist institutional growth and influence from the 1940s to the present'. This includes Mahayana-Theravada interactions (examined more closely below), perhaps in the wake of the revival's overall emphasis on what DeVido describes as "…institution-building (schools, institutes, pagodas, lay associations, publishing, networks of teachers and students, education and promotion of nuns, regional variations of Buddhist belief and practice, social welfareism, the study of global religion and intellectual trends…and network building" (ibid, p.251). One of DeVido's particular focuses is on the inspiration which revivalism in this era derived from the Chinese reformist monk Taixu's (1890 - 1945) innovations, particularly his *renjian fojiao*, 'Buddhism for this world', emphasising the centrality of education, modern publishing, social work and Buddhist lay groups to carve out Buddhism's viable future in the modern world (p.252). DeVido quotes from an article by Do Nam Tu from 1937, in which he states: "Our Buddhist revival is not different from that in China…we agree with renjian fojiao" (p.258).

Nuns Arising: The Mendicant Order

The fact that the revival was launched with a great deal of women's participation, that of nuns and laywomen, is emphasised by DeVido when she indicates that new schools and pagodas were opened for nuns starting in the 1920s. Nuns (*bhikhunis*) were said to have had a long tradition since the 12th century, along with laywomen as followers and donors: "As nuns obtained education and training, the numbers of nuns as teachers and leaders grew, … (which is) today the normal situation throughout Vietnam. One source says that the number of nuns today is ten times that of monks" (comp. 278 – 279).

There is some dispute over whether the Mendicant Order (*Khat Si*) can be considered an example of a composite or as a syncretistic Buddhist movement, as DeVido in particular, has described it as the latter. Founded in 1946 by Master Minh Dang Quang (d.1954) it exemplifies the formation of new, composite Buddhist movements, in which bhikhunis figure prominently, their number having increased exponentially in number in the wake of revivalism as indicated. Khat Si is a unique Buddhist order still thriving in Vietnam today, combining elements of (Chinese) Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, together with the founder's own ideas, as described in his work *Truth*. Officially recognised only in 1966, it is a little-researched order which has been the focus of two articles in volumes dedicated to Vietnamese nuns. For example, Thich Nu To Lien (the title 'Thich Nu' denoting 'bhikhuni', whereas 'Thich' alone is 'bhikkhu') indicates that whereas before 1975 there were only 72 Mendicant nunneries, presently there are 199 (as of 2009), whereas there are a total of 120 Mendicant pagodas, mostly in the South (p. 247). In her article describing the movement, Nguyen Thi Tuyet writes that whereas like the Theravada sangha, Khat Si sangha wear yellow robes and go on alms rounds, like Chinese Mahayana Buddhists, they are vegetarian and the nuns observe the 348 rules of the Dharmagupta Vinaya. The order is called 'Mendicant' because members of the sangha tend to change their abode every three to six months, in the Theravada spirit of being *Anagarika* (homeless), reflecting the lifestyle of the sangha during its original formation. Notably, too, they prefer to chant in Vietnamese language unlike the Pali normally employed by the Vietnamese Theravada sangha or the Chinese with Vietnamese pronunciation, articulated by the Vietnamese Mahayana sangha. Tuyet further points out that they study both Nikaya and Mahayana sutras, and practise Thathagata meditation (Samatha and Vipassana) in the Theravada tradition, rather than Zen meditation (comp. p.55).

Thich Nu To Lien, in her discussion, characterises the prominent Mendicant bhikhuni Thich Nu Huynh Lien, as "…an eminent bhikhuni of the 20th century, who lived for the development of Buddhism, for the movement of women's liberation, and for peace and freedom in Vietnam" (p. 245). Thich Nu Lien is reputed to be the first nun of this order, having become ordained in 1947, as she had been impressed by the founder's teachings, especially his ecumenical bent. One of her campaigns was directed towards encouraging Buddhist scholarship and study, and the author in consequence, graduated in Buddhist Studies and Asian Philosophy from Van Hanh (Buddhist) University, which had been co-founded by Thich Nhat Hanh in Saigon in 1964. It was the first Buddhist university organised along western lines, having started out with two faculties, Buddhist Studies and the Humanities.

It seems that the greatest thrust of this order was towards translating Buddhist teachings of both schools, whether Pali or Mandarin, into the vernacular. Thich Nu Huynh Lien was reputed to be a great poet, too, and "Her poems help bring Dharma into daily life, send prayers to living beings, invoke the national soul, and remind everyone to live in peace, goodwill and equality for the good of humanity". She also participated in the anti-war movement and mobilised both sangha and laity to hold a hunger strike in front of the Independence Palace for many weeks "…which surprised the world and was the pride of our people at that time, an 'army without hair'" (ibid, p.246). Upon her death in 1987, she received many accolades from the government reflecting both her personal prominence and that of the Mendicant order within Vietnamese Buddhism being characterised by an amalgamation of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism which is unique in the entire southeast Asian region.

As regards the evaluation of this order for present purposes, its orientation has, for the most part, been directed inwardly, i.e., towards strengthening an exclusively Vietnamese Buddhist view in the interest of spreading Buddhism primarily amongst the Vietnamese (hence its emphasis on translation into the vernacular), rather than attempting to bring its laudable model of the integration of different Buddhist schools to a wider global public. This is in marked contrast to the activities of the founder of the Order of Interbeing, Thich Nhat Hanh, whose strength was increasingly seen to lie in the creation of a transnational unifying Buddhist view due, at least in part, to his progressive exclusion from his country of birth.

Formation And Impact Of The UBCV

It would appear that the eminent monk, Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926), from the start of his three-year novitiate and once he had received full ordination in 1949, had already laid the spiritual and intellectual foundation for a Unified Buddhist Church. As John Chapman points out, having been ordained by a Zen master hailing from the Lam Te Zen school and also from an indigenous Vietnamese branch of this school, the Lieu Quan school, his studies had included both Theravada and Mahayana traditions (comp. p.299). However, rather than 'going with the flow', Sallie King emphasises that already in 1949, he had developed differences with his teachers at the Bao Guoc Institute in Hue as he had asked them to update the curriculum to include more emphasis on philosophy, foreign languages and literature, besides Buddhism. Possibly, as related by Chapman, Thich Nhat Hanh's inclination towards a more inclusive kind of study had been due to the influence of Taixu on him (ibid, 299 – 300) especially, as indicated, the reformist's influence had been pervasive throughout the region. As his request was rejected, he left with some other disgruntled monks for Saigon where he studied these subjects at Saigon University. In 1950, they founded the Ung Quang Temple in Saigon which not only became the foremost centre of Buddhist studies in South Vietnam, but also a centre of activism and the Buddhist struggle movement (comp. King, 322).

In the build-up to the formation of the UBCV, DeVido indicates that as early as 1951, Buddhist representatives from all over Vietnam had gathered in Hue, the former dynastic capital, located in central-southern Vietnam, to form the All-Vietnam Buddhist Association, proclaiming Buddhism as 'the national-cultural religion' of Vietnam. A significant aspect of this development, she notes, was the creation of a characteristically "… 'Vietnamese' Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana-Theravada exchanges, and the new syncretistic Mendicant Sangha" (comp. p.282). It is perhaps

significant that she does not mention the existence of Mahayana Buddhism – or even Zen - in this context.

Thich Nhat Hanh and his colleagues continued to develop their own 'progressive' brand of Vietnamese Buddhism along the humanistic and ecumenical lines envisioned by Thich Nhat Hanh in Hue, and in 1955, he was invited to become editor of the prominent Buddhist magazine, *Phat Giao Viet Nam (Vietnamese Buddhism)*, which became the official voice of the All-Vietnam Buddhist Association. Chapman notes that within two years its 'publication was suspended because the Buddhist hierarchy disapproved of his articles. Thich Nhat Hanh thought that this was because his proposal for Buddhist unification was unacceptable to the leadership of different congregations'. Finally, in 1957, he decided to found a new monastic 'community of resistance', Phuong Boi, 'Fragrant Palm Leaves', in the highlands of Central Vietnam near the town of Da Lat, 'boi' denoting the kind of palm leaf on which the Buddhist scriptures were originally written down. During this period, he was very active in writing and teaching in order to, as Chapman avers, 'promote the idea of a humanistic, unified Buddhism' (comp. p.300). It seems that due to the 'increasing disapproval of his writings, both by Buddhist leaders and by the dictatorial Diem regime' (ibid), Thich Nhat Hanh decided to absent himself from Vietnam from 1961 to 1963 to study and lecture at Princeton and Columbia Universities. However, following the downfall of the Diem regime in late 1963, he returned to Vietnam in early 1964 at Thich Tri Quang's request, who had assumed leadership of the 'radical' Buddhist wing, and requested him to help rebuild the sangha (comp. King, 322-333).

The UBCV was formed on the basis of the holding of a Vietnamese Buddhist Reunification Congress at a pagoda in Saigon which resulted in the creation, according to Chapman, of the Unified Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam (the word 'sangha' having subsequently been changed to 'church' possibly to include lay people) on 13 January 1964 (p.301). Topmiller explains that "Recognising the need to project a united voice opposing the war and carrying out political and religious activities, they announced in January (1964) the formation of a national association, the Unified Buddhist Church (UBC), which combined elements of eleven different sects and the Theravada and Mahayana streams of Buddhism". However, as the author further relates, some southern Vietnamese Buddhists groups were not included. He concludes: "Buddhism…never spoke with once voice in Vietnam, particularly given the myriad attitudes within its organisations" (comp.6 -7). Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that the UBCV did not enjoy unrivalled success, despite its considerable contributions to the reinstatement of Buddhism following Diem's repressions and subsequently, its anti-war efforts. Due to what Thich Nhat Hanh describes as 'internal rivalries', in particular, between a progressive faction of the youth and intellectuals (like himself), and the conservatives, which he describes as 'stuck in dogmatism and a fear of change', it could not ultimately succeed in its stated aim of unifying all Buddhist schools under its own umbrella (comp. 1967, p.59). Increasingly with time, the UBCV came to be associated with anti-communism, as noted by Thich Nhat Hanh as follows: "The struggle for peace led by the non-communist forces (under the UBCV's umbrella) should be regarded as reflecting the hope and consciousness of the whole Vietnamese people" (bid, p.104). Even in exile, Thich Nhat Hanh continues to represent the UBCV overseas which publishes most of his writings.

This period was a time, according to King's account, of tremendous creative activity for Thich Nhat Hanh: he planned the establishment of Van Hanh Buddhist University, incorporating the kind of broad curriculum he had wished for when he first embarked on his own studies. In this period, Thich Nhat Hanh also founded the School of Youth for Social Service (SYSS) initially as a branch of Van Hanh University, as one of the primary vehicles for engaged Buddhism. He established an underground pacifist press led by his co-worker Cao Ngoc Phuong (Thich Nhat Hanh's chronicler writing under her ordained name Sister Chan Kong), the La Boi Press, which grew quite large and influential during the war, enabling him to produce a steady stream of articles, books and poems calling for peace and reconciliation. Finally, in 1965, he founded Tiep Hien, the 'Order of Interbeing', as a new branch of the Lam Te school of Zen Buddhism, designed as an expression of engaged Buddhism, composed of lay people and sangha. Its four principles were: 1. Non-aThich Thien Anchment to views, the 'most important teaching of Buddhism'; 2. Direct practice leading to realisation; 3. Appropriateness as conformity to the basic tenets of Buddhism while being engaged to 'truly help people'; 4. The employment of skilful means to achieve this (comp. King, 325 – 326).

Thich Nhat Hanh's subjective vision for the SYSS as an expression of his view of engaged Buddhism emerges in his journals dating from February 1964: "We now have an infrastructure of volunteers who can help develop self-help villages. They are equally knowledgeable about social concerns and religious teaching, and they understand effective methods to combat poverty, disease, ignorance, and misunderstanding. They do not work for wages or power, but with love and awareness. The spirit of self-help motivates them. These are young people who are peace-loving and faithful and reject a life based on materialism. They seek only the happiness that a life of service can bring. They have the right kind of spirit to succeed. Vietnam does not lack such young people. There are…perhaps hundreds of thousands of them. Their eyes shine with faith." Thich Nhat Hanh, in the same breath, expresses his hope that the 'Buddhist hierarchy', once they see what a difference such a united corps of young people can make, would support his efforts and thereby adopt Thich Nhat Hanh's brand of engaged Buddhism in place of their own conservative one (comp. 1998, p.150).

Thich Nhat Hanh was forced to flee Vietnam after a failed attempt on his life in 1966, and proceeded to visit 19 countries, talk with numerous world leaders about passing a UN resolution against the Vietnam war, and was even nominated by Martin Luther King Jr. for the Nobel Peace Prize (comp. Topmiller, p.138). Chapman relates that it was at the end of this peace tour that he wrote the influential tract, *Vietnam – The Lotus in the Sea of Fire*, 'to sum up his proposals and the Buddhists' political stand'. This, however, put him into the unfortunate position of being labelled a 'traitor' and a 'communist' by South Vietnam's government, while being condemned for being 'pro-American' by the North, which culminated in his exile lasting until January 2005 (comp. p.304).

In Vietnam, there was 'brutal suppression' after 1966 of the UBCV, mainly by the American-backed South Vietnamese government, the GVN, which however, did not deter the UBC from continuing its non-violent anti-war efforts. The anti-war movement in Vietnam also spawned repeated self-immolations in protest - DeVido cites a total of 57 – (p.251), many of them by nuns, but also by monks and lay people. The first of these had been the venerable 67-year old monk Thich Quang Duc: "In the morning of 11 June 1963 (he) sat down in a meditative position at a busy intersection in Saigon and burned himself to death, shocking Vietnam and the world. His motivation was to 'startle awake' sentient beings, to enlighten all to the repression of Buddhism and Buddhists under the Diem regime" (ibid, 250-251). However, the subsequent self-immolations which continued

throughout the war were clearly in protest against it. In explanation of this act of self-immolation, Thich Nhat Hanh comments: "Like the Buddha in one of his former lives…who gave himself to a hungry lioness which was about to devour her own cubs, the monk believes he is practising the doctrine of highest compassion by sacrificing himself in order to call the attention of, and to seek help from, the people of the world" (1967, p.119).

In trying to raise international awareness of the need for a ceasefire, the UBCV launched a Buddhist Peace Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks in 1969, headed by Thich Nhat Hanh. Finally, as Topmiller relates, in 1974, one year prior to the end of the war, the UBCV inaugurated a 'Do not shoot your brother' campaign in an effort to prevent pro- and anti-communists from killing each other, which contributed to the final defeat of the Americans in 1975 and the reunification of the country, under communist rule. However, as the author points out, far from acknowledging their contribution, the communist government, 'fearing the UBCV's broad appeal', gradually and progressively repressed Buddhism and other religious organisations and 'raided pagodas, closed down orphanages, disbanded religious organisations, and placed prominent Buddhist leaders under house arrest or imprisonment in remote locations'. It eventually established a government-controlled Buddhist church which excluded the UBCV, but included others like the Mendicants, Hoa Hao and Theravada Buddhists, alongside the more common Vietnamese and Zen Buddhist groups (comp. 149 – 151). The communist government also banned Thich Nhat Hanh's books and tapes, though, according to Chapman, they were still widely distributed underground (p.304).

Taylor relates that the state's continued non-recognition of the UBCV has not prevented, in his opinion, an upsurge of Buddhism in recent years: "A significant sea change in official policy towards religion has occurred in tandem with recent major changes in economic policy and social relations. The party now sees in religion a source of inner strength that might aid in the development of a prosperous, orderly and wholesome society". He indicates that the communist government acknowledges in particular the valuable role religious organisations play as regards their charitable and community development activities (p. 8, 32-33). It also appears significant that in 2006, Vietnam was removed from the US State Department's list of countries of particular concern as regards religious freedom (ibid, p.53).

DeVido, apparently sharing Taylor's opinion, indicates that senior monks and nuns who had graduated from Buddhist institutes in Vietnam now lead the Buddhist establishment. Buddhist studies in Vietnam had been greatly expanded with the Vietnamese Buddhist Studies Institute having held its first international conference in July 2006. Scholars and monastics are active in the fields of publishing and research and Dr. Le Manh That (ordained name: Thich Tri Sieu), who had served a long jail sentence for his (former) anti-government stance, has recently been made head of the Vietnamese Buddhist Studies Institute in Saigon, with land granted by the government, planning to reopen and expand Van Hanh Buddhist University to be renamed after the renowned martyr-monk, Quang Duc University. Despite their avowedly anti-folk religion and anti-superstition views, the government has recently acknowledged the veracity of certain Buddhist miracles, specifically, Thich Quang Duc's heart relic, having been the only part of his body to have remained unburned, and the 'mummified monks' of the 17th century, whose bodies became mummified on the basis of the strength of their Zen meditation practice and remain so to the present day (comp. DeVido, 283 -284).

In the wake of the UBCV's non-recognition, Thich Nhat Hanh was, as indicated, barred from re-entering his country and was only granted permission to return in 2005 after an absence of nearly 39 years, followed by another visit in 2007. As related by Chapman, these were very high profile visits as Thich Nhat Hanh was accompanied by an international contingent of supporters and sangha with each stage of the journey punctuated by Dharma talks held in front of a variety of audiences, which had to be approved and supervised by the government. The author indicates that one of Thich Nhat Hanh's stated aims in returning was to try to reconcile the conflict between the state-recognised Buddhist sangha and the UBCV (p.306), the latter still active in its campaign for democracy and free elections, freedom of religion and human rights, despite its banned status. Chapman indicates that the government's policy of *Doi Moi* (economic progress, Vietnamese style) had led to a marked increase in social inequality, especially in the area of health and education. In response, the government adopted a policy of encouraging religious organisations of shouldering more responsibility in caring for the casualties inflicted by Doi Moi, although the UBCV's attempts in this direction were, as predicted, not welcomed. Chapman, however, avers that at the same time, Buddhists, including some former SYSS members, had for years been quietly involved in welfare activities and overseas Vietnamese have also been performing their part in contributing to welfare and educational projects. He concludes: "One consequence of Thich Nhat Hanh's visit may be to increase the visibility of such meritorious activities and help propel forward their official normalisation" (p.335).

Thich Nhat Hanh's Contribution To Vietnamese Buddhism

In this discussion, the preference is on considering aspects of Thich Nhat Hanh's philosophy as a whole, rather than restricting it to the concept of 'Interbeing' alone, although this may be said to be its defining characteristic. Thich Nhat Hanh's system of thought and action is at least partially based, as suggested by Christopher Queen, on the Avatamsaka ('Flower Garland') sutra concerning the co-arising and co-existence of all beings, sentient and non-sentient, and his attendant ethical non-dualism is said to embrace both the victims and the oppressors in situations of great social suffering (Comp. Queen, 334 – 335). However, he also quotes Thich Nhat Hanh as stating: "Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology, even Buddhist ones. All systems of thought are guiding means; they are not the absolute truth" (ibid, p.330).

In fact, in the preface of one of Thich Nhat Hanh's earliest and greatest works, *The Miracle of Mindfulness, A Manual on Meditation,* the translator, Mobi Ho, (as the book was originally written in 1975 in Vietnamese as a long letter to Brother Quang, a leading member of the SYSS) indicates that "American Buddhists have been impressed by the natural and unique blending of Theravada and Mahayana traditions, characteristic of Vietnamese Buddhism, which the book expresses" (p. xii). The book is essentially a discussion of the application of mindfulness to one's daily actions based on the discourse surrounding interdependence: "The contemplation on interdependence is…intended to remove the false barriers of discrimination so that one can enter into the universal harmony of life… (it) is to help one penetrate reality in order to be one with it, not be become caught up in philosophical opinion…The raft is used to cross the river (and not) to be carried around on your shoulders… The essence of Mahayana Buddhist teaching lies in this…When reality is perceived in its nature of ultimate perfection, the practitioner has reached a level of wisdom called non-discrimination mind...in which there is no longer any discrimination between subject and object" (55-57). This is,

however, not to detract from what is expressed in the book's title as forming its main focus, which is a discourse on mindfulness. In fact, a translation of the *Satipatthana Sutta* (*The Foundation of Mindfulness)* from the original Pali is included at the end of the book, in a *Selection of Buddhist Sutras,* as a testimony to its pivotal importance for Thich Nhat Hanh. In Batchelor's opinion, the Satipatthana Sutta is "The most important discourse ever given by the Buddha on mental development" (p. 341).

The beauty of the book lies in the fact that, while reconciling various Buddhist views, its aim is to utilise skilful means (i.e., mindfulness) when it comes to solving the original problem identified by the Buddha, that of human suffering, besides in the practice of engaged Buddhism. In the words of Mobi Ho, "Thich Nhat Hanh wrote to Brother Quang to encourage the workers (of the SYSS during the dark days of their persecution, kidnapping and even murder)…(as he) wished to remind them of the essential discipline of following one's breath to nourish and maintain calm mindfulness, even in the midst of the most difficult circumstances" (p.viii). As the book became more widely translated and had an ever greater international circulation, it inspired many people, for example, young Buddhists in Thailand who, too, 'wished to act in a spirit of awareness and reconciliation to help avert the armed conflict erupting in Thailand' and even 'A young Iraqi student in danger of being deported to his homeland, where he faces death for his refusal to fight...he and his mother have both read (the book) and are practising awareness of the breath' (p.ix, p.xi).

It is perhaps instructive to mention Thich Nhat Hanh's overall impact, in this context, on practitioners of Buddhism globally: "Already internationally famous as a peace activist while still residing in Vietnam, Thich Nhat Hanh has become, since his departure from Vietnam in the late 1960s, one of the most prolific and widely-read authors on Buddhism. Versions of his books have been translated into many languages and millions of copies have been sold internationally. His Order of Interbeing is a major transnational movement and his meditation retreats have been opened up in many countries. Lay Buddhists and monastics in many of the world's wealthiest and powerful nations have found his teachings of mindfulness to be an effective method to cope with the stresses and dilemmas of life in a consumerist, materialist world. A further measure of his success and adaptability of his ideas is that for many years, these texts have filtered back informally to Vietnam, proving immensely popular among Buddhists there" (Taylor, p.26). Chapman mentions that he has published over 85 books, more than 40 of them in English, and that there are about 300 of his local lay practice centres worldwide (p.305).

Buddhism In Present Day Vietnam

As regards the present state of Buddhism in Vietnam, it is striking that an international conference devoted to women in Buddhism, Sakyadhita, was invited by the Vietnamese government (through its department of religious affairs) to hold one of its regular two-yearly conferences (in 2009 – 2010) in Ho Chi Minh City, the largest metropolis in Vietnam - far larger and more significant, as it is Vietnam's 'economic capital' - than the actual capital of Hanoi, in the north. This itself would appear to bear witness to the government's growing awareness of needing to be open to both unifying and occasionally antagonistic Buddhist views, as well as to international Buddhist discourses per se, even in relatively sensitive areas like those of female ordination and women's rights in Buddhism. China - to which Vietnam is often compared as they share a common

border, historical ties, and both have communist governments - in contrast, could hardly be expected to act as host to a conference of this nature and significance. Sakyadhita, it must be remarked, has among its founders the prominent American nun, Karma Lekshe Tsomo, a prolific writer, university professor and outspoken proponent of freedom of religious expression, who was instrumental in leading the delegation in their encounters with the religious affairs department in Vietnam. Far from keeping a low profile as regards their hosting of this conference, we (the participants) were the subject of extensive media coverage and were escorted, as guests of the government, to a number of nunneries both in and around Saigon, but also in Hue, the former dynastic capital, and even to Da Lat, where we were guests at the nunnery serving as the headquarters of the Truc Lam school of Vietnamese Zen Buddhism. The nunneries which we visited were visibly involved in charitable activities like orphanages, refuges for the poor and disabled, administering HIV treatment and free medical care, etc.

As regards the question of religious freedom, there is no doubt, however, that Buddhist organisations must still conform to the government's expectations: "Legally, the Vietnamese constitution provides for freedom of worship. In practice, however, official government recognition is still required for all religious groups to operate legally. Also, even if they are officially recognised, religious organisations must consult with the government about their operations, including leadership selection, and are supervised by the Office of Religious Affairs. The government significantly restricts the activities of religious groups that it does not recognise, or that it declares to be at variance with state laws and policies" (Chapman, p.311). The continued ban of the UBCV, therefore, undoubtedly accounted for the fact that the participants of Sakyadhita were not escorted to any of Thich Nhat Hanh's monasteries, one of which was the object of particular contention during our stay, as the authorities had cut off its access to water and electricity probably as a way of warning the sangha to fall into line as regards accepting the government's choice of abbot against their own and Thich Nhat Hanh's choice.

In reference to the activities of the predominant Vietnamese Zen school, that of Bamboo Grove, its current patriarch, Thich Thanh Tu, has obviously become increasingly successful in globalising Vietnamese Zen Buddhism and simultaneously widening its appeal amongst the Vietnamese both in Vietnam and abroad. As related by Alexander Soucy in Taylor's volume, while Thich Thanh Tu's aim is to attempt to rival Thich Nhat Hanh's own influence globally, in Vietnam in particular, Truc Lam seems to provide a bridge between the westernised traditions that stress meditation on the one hand, and more traditional Vietnamese Buddhist practices on the other, by appealing to nationalism and formerly elite views regarding authentic Buddhism (p.366). While Soucy discusses the growth of this group in North Vietnam to encompass more contemplative practices alongside the devotional, I had occasion to visit what is probably his biggest nunnery which is located in the south and can testify to the fact that in the south, too, Zen, alongside other contemplative practices like those of Theravada Buddhism, are growing in popularity, especially amongst the (western educated) and professional classes.

Concluding Remarks

The attempt has been made in the above to demonstrate how 'unifying Buddhist views' in Vietnam originally developed in the wake of historical, socio-political events, particularly those surrounding modernisation. This development culminated not only in the creation of a new composite-cum-syncretistic school of Vietnamese Buddhism, that of the Mendicant Order, but also in the formulation of a unifying view as articulated by Thich Nhat Hanh. Though based on fundamental Theravada teachings (particularly those of Mindfulness), his system could successfully integrate aspects of Mahayana teachings to arrive at a unified view which has resonated with people all over the globe. This not only has relevance when it comes to one's individual practice, but is also seen to have promoted engaged Buddhism, facilitating its authentic response to situations characterised by suffering in whatever form it may take.

In the final analysis, it would appear that the development of various kinds of Buddhism –whether syncretistic or composite in nature, unified or not – is essentially a dynamic, ongoing process, which, as the present study has hoped to demonstrate, can not be viewed in isolation from its socio-political context. At least in the case of the unifying view underlying Thich Nhat Hanh's system of practice, the ultimate ramifications of such a development can be far-reaching and universal, rather than merely particularistic and limited to one national configuration. In this process, having been excluded from benefitting a few, this particular unifying view has undoubtedly been catapulted to the benefit of many – with perhaps many more to come.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anh, T.U.T., Rethinking Vietnamese Buddhist History, in : Essays into Vietnam's Past, Taylor & Whitmore, eds., 1995

Batchelor, Stephen, The Awakening of the West, 1992

Chapman, John, The 2005 Pilgrimage and Return to Vietnam of Exiled Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, in: Taylor, Philip

Christopher S. Queen, Engaged Buddhism, in: Prebish & Baumann, eds., Westward Dharma: Buddhism beyond Asia, 2002

DeVido, Elise, "Buddhism for this World": The Buddhist Revival in Vietnam, 1920 to 1951, and its Legacy, in: Taylor, Philip

King, Sallie B., Thich Nhat Hanh and the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam: Nondualism in Action, in: Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia, edited by C.S. Queen & S. B. King, 1996

McHale, Shawn F., Print and Power: Confucianism, Communism and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam, 2004

Soucy, Alexander, Nationalism, Globalism and the Re-establishment of the Truc Lam Thien Buddhist Sect in Northern Vietnam, in: Taylor, Philip

Taylor, Philip, Modernity and Re-enchantment in Post-revolutionary Vietnam, in: Taylor, Philip, Modernity and Re-enchantment: Religion in Post-revolutionary Vietnam, 2007

Thich Nhat Hanh, Fragrant Palm Leaves: Journals 1962 – 1966, tr. Mobi Ho, 1998

Thich Nhat Hanh, The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation, tr. Mobi Ho, 1991

Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire, 1967

Thich Nu To Lien, The Holy Lotus of the Mendicant Bhikkhuni Sangha, in: 11th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women, 'Eminent Buddhist Women', ed. by K.L.Tsomo, 2009

Thich Quang Lien, A Short Introduction of Buddhism in Vietnam, 1968

Thich Thien An, Buddhism and Zen in Vietnam in Relation to the Development of Buddhism in Asia, 1975

Topmiller, Robert J., Lotus Unleashed: The Buddhist Peace Movement in South Vietnam, 1964 – 1966, 2002

Tyet, Nguyen Thi, Nuns of the Mendicant Tradition, in: Tsomo, Karma Lekshe, Bridging Worlds: Buddhist Women's Voices across Generations, 2004

Webb, Russel, Obituary of Heinz Bechert, in: Buddhist Studies Review 22, Part 2, 2005

Humanistic Buddhism: The 3.5th Yana?

Xiaofei Tu

Prelude:

In this paper I discuss the humanistic Buddhist movement in the Chinese speaking Buddhist world with special attention to the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order in Taiwan and the Chinese Buddhist Association in mainland China. Although some work has been done on this topic,[1] these studies have the following shortcomings: First, they lack an in depth analysis of the theoretical basis and historical background of the rise of humanistic Buddhism. In particular, they ignore the impact of 20th century Chinese political revolutions and intellectual progressive thought on Buddhism. Second, in relation to the aforementioned negligence, the same studies tend to focus on the humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan and completely overlook the development of humanistic Buddhist theory and practice in mainland China since 1949. Third, such studies rely heavily on English literature mainly produced by Chinese Buddhist groups and have not made use of recent scholarship in Chinese language on humanistic Buddhism. My paper intends to address these three issues by highlighting political impact shaping the outlook of humanistic Buddhism, comparing the mainland Chinese version of humanistic Buddhism with the case of Taiwan, and making full use of recent scholarship in both Taiwan and mainland China. In conclusion, I compare Chinese humanistic Buddhism to Engaged Buddhism in South East Asian and the West and analyze some similarities and differences between the two.

Introduction:

For reform minded 20th century Chinese Buddhists, Chinese Buddhism in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties was stagnant, to say the least. According to the reformers, the very existence of their religion was called into question. Problems inflicting Buddhism included disconnections with the contemporary world, increased superstitious elements in Buddhist rituals, little if any training for monks and nuns, and corruption of the Buddhist leadership. As such, the traditional form of Chinese Buddhism had lost following of the general populace and incurred hostility from the social elite and the government. For its own survival, Buddhism had to change.

Master Taixu (1890-1947) was one of the best known advocates of a Buddhism reformation in China. Taixu's idea was so revolutionary that he has been compared to the Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism, a facilitator of innovation in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Indeed, Taixu had laid the ground for new developments in the 20th century and 21st century Chinese Buddhism. A disciple of Taixu, Master Yin Shun (1906-2005) continued the effort of his teacher by making the conceptions and theories of humanistic Buddhism more comprehensive and systematic.

[1] For instance see Stuart Chandler. *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization*. University of Hawaii Press, 2004; and Don Alvin Pittman. *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

For Tai Xu and Yin Shun[2], Chinese Buddhism of his time had turned into a religion for the dead since the aspiration to the other worlds was the only concern for the practitioners. According to them, however, this should not be the Buddhism that the Buddha taught. In Ekottaragama-Sutra, for instance, it is stated that the Buddha did not and would not achieve his Buddhahood in another world because his mission must be carried out in the human world. In classic Buddhist tradition, the Buddha is not seen as a god or an angel. He was a human with an enlightened consciousness. The Buddha achieved a state of mind that was bright, clear, and joyful in a world full of darkness, evil and suffering. For Taixu and Yin Shun, the Buddha was and still is "the Buddha of the world". He is a rare teacher who gives insights to freedom and liberation in the real world, rather than promises of Heaven or indulgence in meditative solitude. The early Buddhist teachings in Agama - the basic theories of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, five aggregates, karmic retribution, etc. - are all designed to relieve human sufferings here and now. Hence Yin Shun maintained that "true Buddhism cannot but be humanistic Buddhism."[3]

According to the two scholars, even the apparent other-worldly Buddhist concept of reincarnation tilts unmistakably towards the human world. Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings fall under six categories: gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, asuras, and residents in hell. Although common practitioners may aspire to be reborn in paradisiacal realms where gods live, and dread about the prospect of hell, it is the human world that Buddhism privileges. The human life is unique and advantageous among sentient beings because unlike the gods who are distracted by heavenly bliss and tend to forget to seek liberation, unlike animals who are ignorant, and unlike hungry ghosts and creatures in hell whose extreme pains prevent them form thinking anything else, humans are in the best position to pursue enlightenment. Conscious of their own inadequacies, equipped with intelligence and will power, and most importantly, living in the same realm with the great teacher the Buddha himself, humans are the best candidates to be guided by the Dharma.[4]

Moreover, when we examine the Five Precepts of Buddhism: no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lying, no drinking, they are human ethical codes. Mahayana Buddhism, the Greater Vehicle, promises that all sentient beings can become Buddhas, but to become a Buddha, one must first be a good person. What is more, unlike secular ethical systems, Buddhism's ethical concerns do not stop at asking a man to be a good man. The distinct feature of Mahayana teachings is its altruism and compassion known as the Bodhisattva way, a unity of self-liberation and liberation for all. The ultimate goal of Mahayana Buddhism is removal of pain and suffering of all living beings. Finally, secular and other religious ethics are without exception based on a concept of "self". While the Mahayana Bodhisattva compassion stems from the realization that self is illusory. Yin Shun said: The Buddhist morality looks like Christian agape, but in reality, it is very different. This is because the Buddhist compassion is based on a clear-eyed insight into human life and cosmic reality, devoid of blind dogmas of the final judgment and sentimental attachments to an immortal soul. Buddhist ethics is this worldly oriented through and through and in this surpasses other ethical thought.[5]

[2] There have been discussions of nuanced differences between the thought of Taixu and Yin Shun, but it is beyond the scope of this paper. See Chen Xinqiao. "Remarks on Humanistic Buddhism." Fayin, 1997(9/10).

[3] *Collected Works of Taixu*. Beijing, shehui kexue chubanshe, 1995. 227. *Collected Works of Yin Shun*. Beijing, shehui kexue chubanshe, 1995. 92.

[4] Taixu, 299; Yin Shun, 137.

[5] Yin Shun, 199.

Both Taixu's and Yin Shun's political ideas are radical by the standards of their day. Both personally experienced the 1911 revolution that overthrew the last Chinese feudal dynasty and led to the founding of the Republic of China. They welcomed the revolution enthusiastically and their Buddhism was heavily influenced by it. Interestingly, political monks played important roles in both 19th century Japanese revolution that made the Meiji Restoration possible and early 20th century Chinese revolution. In his youth Taixu became acquainted with "revolutionary monks" who directly involved in uprisings against the old dynasty. These radical monks exposed him to the trends of reformist thought that were popular at the time. Through them he came to read Chinese revolutionaries such as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and translations of Tolstoy, Bakuin, and Marx. In in a later time, Tai Xu would call for a revolution within the Buddhist community modeled on the political one, borrowing the latter's ideology of freedom and equality.[6] Yin Shun fully heartedly agreed with his teacher on social equity and justice, and he went a step further. Yin Shun described with great interest and sympathy the Buddhist mythological kingdom of Uttarakuru in his popular book Introduction to Buddhism, in which he intentionally altered the classic sutras to give the Buddhist myth a socialist tint, including the depiction of fair economical distributions, public services for all citizens and free encounters between boys and girls.[7] Such thought has stayed alive in Chinese Buddhist temples and lay communities, despite political upheavals discussed below.

The Case of Taiwan, Focusing on Fo Guang Shan

When it comes to putting the humanistic Buddhist principles into practice, Taiwan's Buddhist communities have made great progress. In general, the rapid and free growth of Taiwanese Buddhism began during Taiwan's economic take-off in 1970's and was accelerate after July 14, 1987 when the Taiwan authorities lifted the martial law that had been enforced since 1949. But the seeds of such developments were planted in earlier years. When the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) lost power in mainland China and retreated to Taiwan, many Buddhists in the humanistic Buddhism cohort (mainly Master Taixu's disciples and followers, including Yin Shun) ended up in this island too. However, this was a difficult time for the immigrant Buddhists because Taiwan had been under Japanese occupation from 1895 to 1945, and been in long-time isolation from mainland China. The more conservative local Buddhists had trouble appreciating and accepting the mainland's humanistic Buddhist innovations. Moreover, the progressive outlook of humanistic Buddhism was deeply suspicious in the eyes of the Nationalist authorities who just lost China to the Communists. On May 20, 1949, the Nationalist government announced martial law in Taiwan prohibiting the existence of unauthorized political parties, religious groups, and civil organizations. In June 1949, secret police arrested a number of mainland monks including Master Hsing Yun on the ground that they might have been communist spies. They were released shortly after at the intervention of the wife of General Sun Li-jen, a devout lay Buddhist. Yet such detentions were no small matter because there was a similar case in which the arrested monk was convicted and executed.[8] At the same time, Master Yin Shun was also censored by the propogandic branch of the Taiwanese authorities for his left leaning political views. Adding to harsh political control, Buddhism in Taiwan was also financially restrained by the backward economy.

[6] Taixu, 277.
[7] Yin Shun. *An Introduction to Buddhism*. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe. 1998.
[8] Jiang Canteng. Taiwanese Humanistic Buddhism. Taibei: Nantian shuju, 1999.

Despite these unfavorable factors, Taiwan's humanistic Buddhists were unfailingly making effort to preserve their cause. Among them, Master Yin Shun published profusely on Buddhist history and philosophy, inspiring Buddhist practitioners and non-Buddhist scholars alike. A temple scholar and no activist, Yin Shun has been criticized by some as a giant in word and a dwarf in action, nevertheless, there is no doubt that he provided a solid intellectual foundation for humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan. In his own words, Yin Shun was sowing on ice because the political environment at this time made people unresponsive to his messages. But the seeds he planted would grow and come to fruition eventually. Scholars and practitioners from both Taiwan and the Mainland praise Master Yin Shun's contributions. Dr. Guo Peng comments that Yin Shun should be honored in the hall of fame in Buddhism, together with all the prior Indian and Chinese masters. A leading Taiwanese publisher, Mr. Gao Benzhao, compares the impact of Yin Shun's work to Chinese Buddhism with the Enlightenment era thinkers' impact on Europe.[9]

When Master Yin Shun was committed to the construction of humanistic Buddhist theory, the then 23-year-old Master Hsing Yun started the practice of humanistic Buddhism in 1951 in southern Taiwan. Hsing Yun's undertakings began with natural disaster relief, orphanage, Dharma lessons in prisons, and spiritual guidance and economic help in remote villages. For such social commitments, Master Hsing Yun has made his Fo Guang Shan order both rich and poor. While donations from laity, the main source of income for Fo Guang Shan have been constantly growing, the order's balance sheet has almost always been in the red due to generous spending in social work. Interestingly, such financial arrangements also reduce the possibility of corruption because no money is kept in the Fo Guang Shan's bank account. All these activities, commonsensical in hindsight, were unprecedented and quite controversial in the religious conservative and politically repressive Taiwan. But Master Hsing Yun was able to withheld political pressures and continued his work.

From Taiwan's rapid economic growth in the 1970's, both the general society and Buddhist groups benefited. At this time, Hsing Yun expanded the scope of social services to build hospitals clinics, publishing house, and Buddhist universities.[10] With the end of martial law in late 1980's, Buddhism in Taiwan went into a period of thriving.

Ironically, the internationalization of Taiwan Buddhism happened at the time when Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations in 1971 and the Taiwanese government fell in a state of diplomatic isolation. Losing the UN seat to the mainland Chinese government, Taiwan as a result also lost recognition from the majority of the international society. Because of the pulling out of foreign citizens and international organizations including Christian missionaries from Taiwan, Fo Guang Shan was not only able to claim the religious market left behind by Protestant and Catholic groups, but also managed to reach out to an international audience after securing the home base. With the expansion of Buddhist orders and their communication with the world outside Taiwan comes the expansion of ranges of spiritual practice and activities. Modern technology is widely used, Internet and satellite TV are becoming the favorite way to get their messages out to the worldwide audience. Fo Guang Shan has organized numinous international Buddhist conferences and made exchanges with international Buddhist higher education institutions. Such frequent exchanges cannot but bring to Fo Guang Shan new spiritual perspectives. It was also during this time that Fo Guang Shan began to build centers in North America and Europe and began to take interests in global issues such as environmental and ecological protection as well as social justice in the international arena.

[9] Miao Fangming. "A Study of Taiwan's Humanistic Buddhism." Zongjiaoxueyanjiu, 2009(3).

[10] For a complete list of Fo Guang Shan's social work, see Yong Yun, Fo guang shan annals, Gaoxiong Xian : Fo guang shan wen jiao ji jin hui chu ban, 2007.

Traditionally, Buddhist charitable works have been based on a couple of reasons. Giving has been encouraged on the Buddhist canonical authorities and various Buddhist philosophical grounds. For instance, the Buddhist teaching about codependent origination ensures us that all human beings are interrelated, and everyone' wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of the entire humanity and vice versa. Also, all sentient beings have been our fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers in eons of endless reincarnation. Hence helping strangers is in fact helping our family. Moreover, karmic laws dictate that what goes around comes around. Dana is always a reward by itself: it repays givers with good reputation and respect from others on the one hand, and empowers the giver to cultivate her generosity and discover her inner wisdom on the other. Finally, for Mahayana Buddhism, giving is to show the unpolluted Buddha nature that is equally shared by all of us because everyone can give regardless of her social status and finances - dana does not have to be monetary, it can be in the form of good will, kindness, and care.

These time-honored justifications for social commitments are noble and beautiful, however, are they sufficient in today's world? Buddhist practitioners and scholars such as Dr. Jiang Canteng have urged Fo Guang Shan and other Buddhist orders to go beyond the traditional scope and to think about the socio-economical sufferings of the masses under an exploitative and unsustainable capitalism. We will return to this discussion in the last part of my paper.

The Case of Mainland China: Focusing on Chinese Buddhist Association

One of the issues in the study of humanistic Buddhism that has received little scholarly attention is humanistic Buddhism in mainland China. In this section of my paper, I shall discuss it with special attention to the Chinese Buddhist Association and its longtime leader Zhao Puchu.

According to its own mission statement, the goal of the Chinese Buddhist Association is for Buddhism in China to adapt to "socialism with Chinese characteristics." The latter is the official label the Chinese government put on themselves that describe a political system that combines a Maoist ideology and a partially free market economy. But this was not the case when the Association was first founded in 1953. When they seized power in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) decided to tolerate religions including Buddhism because of their belief that religion could not be forcefully eliminated by political means. Hence the Chinese Buddhist Association was founded to accommodate the needs of Buddhist practitioners. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the tolerant policy was reversed by the extreme wing of the Party. Buddhist temples were closed, sometimes physically torn down, and monks and nuns were forced to defrock. Things have changed for the better since 1980's when the Cultural Revolution officially ended. In fact, Chinese government is actively promoting Buddhism for the purpose of boosting China's "soft power," and Buddhism is seen by the government as a cultural resource and part of the positive China image. Ironically, a large part of the government support is to provide generous amount of money for Buddhists to rebuild temples that were dismantled in the Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless, there remain governmental restrictions on the Buddhist proselytization and activities. For instance, destroyed Buddhist temples can be rebuilt on their original locations but no new ones are allowed to build. Monks and nuns are not permitted to promote Buddhism in public outside existing Buddhist establishments, etc. Because such restrictions are universally imposed on all religious institutions in this country, criticisms about curtailed religious freedom have been a topic in and outside China. One of the criticisms has been

directed at the Chinese Buddhist Association for its alleged accomplice role. According to the critics, the Chinese Buddhist Association has not represented the best interests of Buddhists in China but rather has capitulated to the restrictive rules by the government.

Partly to answer such critiques, the Chinese Buddhist Association and its scholars have attempted to provide a justification of its cooperation with the government by emphasizing the meeting points between socialism and the humanistic Buddhist ideas. Zhao Puchu, the late chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association, had been a vocal advocate of humanistic Buddhism, as student of Master Taixu, and a good friend of Master Hsing Yun. According to Zhao, traditional forms of Buddhism were elitist in orientation; they were obsessed with abstruse metaphysical speculations and wishful thinking about the afterlife, and thus served only the class interests of the rich and powerful who had no sense of the real life of the majority of people. It is the mission of the Buddhists in the new socialist China to reclaim Buddhism and make it serve the working class. For this purpose, Zhao was not afraid of making changes in traditional beliefs and practice. He pointed out that when Buddhism was first introduced to China, it adapted to Chinese culture, absorbing the country's religious and cultural nutrition. This has been one of the greatest successes in Buddhist history. We inherit what prior generations have done, and what we are doing will be heritage for the future generations. Buddhism emerged from an Indian society that mandated the caste system, while today equality and fraternity are the consensus of the majority of people and foundational values of the current Chinese political system. To keep Buddhism viable and relevant in contemporary China, Zhao reappropriated the Buddhist concept of pure land. Instead of understanding the pure land in a transcendent sense, Zhao interpreted it as a relentless human pursuit of liberation from suffering. Hence it can be made compatible with China's socialist polity. Furthermore, the Chinese Chan motto "a day without work, a day without food" was used by Zhao to justify all people's right and obligation to work. Zhao pointed out that in Indian Buddhism, monks' and nuns' non-productive life style was considered to be spiritual desirable. But in China, monks and nuns living exclusively on laity's alms would be considered lazy and corrupt, and it is a Chinese Chan tradition that all religious people have to engage in agricultural work. According to Zhao, this characteristic of Chinese Buddhist makes it naturally amicable to socialist ideals. For him, historical Buddhist communities regulated by the Chinese version of precepts were nothing short of semi-socialist utopias. In conclusion, Zhao exalted today's Chinese Buddhists find the common denominator between socialism and Buddhism and work with the current government for the same goal: building a happy and equitable pure land on earth.[11]

It has to be point out that Zhao's position was not merely motivated by political expediency but stemmed from his personal experiences and beliefs. Zhao became a socialist in his early years. In as early as the 1930's, a young Zhao was a true admirer of Master Taixu and was closely involved in the humanistic Buddhism circles. Facing the Japanese military aggression during the WWII and the resulting sufferings of Chinese people, Zhao believed that repelling the invaders and saving the state were Buddhist deeds. He helped organizing medical support groups to offer treatment to wounded Chinese soldiers as well as civilian refugees and help organize and send young people directly to the frontline. A longtime friend of the CCP, Zhao was entrusted with leading the Chinese Buddhist Association since its inauguration. During hard times of the Cultural Revolution, Zhao did not lose heart and he believed the sheer size of Chinese Buddhist population would be a deterring factor that prevented Buddhism from being wiped out.[12]

[11] Zhao Puchu. *Questions and Answers on Buddhism*. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1993. 22pp.

[12] Zhu Hong. "Zhao Puchu's Buddhist Life." Xueshujie, 2003(98/1).

After the Cultural Revolution, Zhao single handedly implemented humanistic Buddhism as the guidelines of the Chinese Buddhist Association. Like other humanistic Buddhists, Zhao uses the Bodhisattva ideal as a way to justify their social concerns. That is, he emphasizes the importance of collective liberation rather than personal practice. The value and dignity of each individual Buddhist life, no matter how insignificant it may look in the secular sense, lies in the way she contributes to build a world without military aggressions, political persecution, economic injustice, and environmental damages. We should not abandon our duties for the presence and look for an unforeseeable afterlife. Quoting Yin Shun, Zhao maintains that "seeking enlightenment without the intention to serve the society is tragedy for Buddhists."[13] Because of Zhao's strong advocacy, humanistic Buddhism has gone mainstream, even become orthodoxy on the mainland Buddhist scene. Much like Hsing Yun, besides affirming and elaborating the principles of humanistic Buddhism, Zhao was a leader and person of action. Although much smaller on scale, Zhao's endeavors during his tenure with the Chinese Buddhist Association were very similar to that Fo Guang Shan and focused on charitable and scholarly, cultural activities rather than more "religious" practices. Under the leadership of the Chinese Buddhist Association, charitable works have been done for the underprivileged groups such as physically challenged people and children from impoverished families. One of representative social work that the Chinese Buddhist Association takes pride in and likes to showcase to the public is the orphanage "Hongde Jiayuan" in Hebei province that has lasted for more than two decades.[14] One thing deserves mentioning is that without the almost total freedom Taiwanese Buddhism enjoys after the end of the martial law, mainland Buddhists have to skillful navigate through legal obstacles when pursuing their goals in the mainland. The future of the mainland Buddhist social work is still to be observed.

Conclusion: Whence Humanistic Buddhism?

At this point, a brief comparison of Chinese humanistic Buddhism and the Western Engaged Buddhism seems in order given their similarities. It is interesting to note different attitudes of members of two groups regarding this issue. It appears that Western Engaged Buddhists are willing to extend comradery to humanistic Buddhist groups, an example is the inclusion of a Fo Guang Shan monk on the advisory committee of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. On the other hand, the humanistic Buddhists I have talked to are to some degree reluctant to make the two names interchangeable. However, such hesitation appears to stem from a sectarian pride that does not allow their own group to lose its uniqueness, both in practice and in name. In any event, I believe the parallels between humanistic Buddhism and Engaged Buddhism are very suggestive and unmistakable.

Though a loosely connected Buddhist movement without a central geographical location or institutionalized headquarters, Engaged Buddhists share some core beliefs. These include the conviction that in contemporary world delusion has become institutionalized because of colonialist, imperialist, and capitalist aggressions against the Third World and the environment. The traditional concept of trivisa is tenable only if we understand it to be massive, collective, and highly organized social actions of certain countries and trans-national corporations. That is, human suffering must be seen in light of gigantic, carefully arranged imperial dominance, genocide, systematic political violence, institutionalized economic exploitation, unjust allocation of social privileges, and

[13] Zhao, 193.

[14] Caituan faren foguangsha wenjiao jijinhui. *Chan and Humanistic Buddhism*. Kaohsiung, 2007, 51pp.

criminal abuse and waste of natural resources that have been happening in our world. Under such conditions, it is impossible to seek individual spiritual salvation that is divorced from political life. Because individuals cannot live outside society, and the enlightenment of a single person, even if it is achievable, does not help the elimination of collective suffering. Societal, collective delusion cannot and should be addressed by a simplistic answer of personal purification of mind and heart. In societies that deprive basic political freedoms and economic sustenance, spiritual freedom is out of reach. Such reality calls today's Buddhists to a resistance movement that is bonded by liberal democratic values and resorts to all fighting means available in the civic society.[15]

A related insight of Engaged Buddhism is the disenchantment of traditional Buddhist cosmology in post European Enlightenment times. Such mythological structures historically helped Buddhists understand their place in the world and make sense of their lives. Today, however, the otherworldly Buddhist concepts such as six realms have lost credibility and are not able to produce a positive life affirming attitude. When a concept of karma understood as rewards and punishments in the afterlife sound untenable, a new theory that gives hope for a just social and economic order in this life is in demand. Thus the quest for a just and equitable world is a religious quest and helps the achievement of collective liberation.[16]

Humanistic Buddhism is in clear agreement with Engaged Buddhism regarding their this-worldly concerns. From early on, the social ills of the capitalist society had been the targets of Master Hsing Yun's repeated criticism. He also used canonical stories about the Buddha's tending to sick and blind monks to emphasize that Buddhism should always side with people in need.[17] Master Hsing Yun expresses solidarity with the poor based on the indiscriminative saving power of the Dharma. Some of the younger monks at Fo Guang Shan have gone further than their teacher in aggressively addressing contemporary social and environmental issues. Ven. Chuan Zhao for one has been a brave voice in protesting against corporate irresponsibility and government inaction regarding environmental issues in Taiwan.[18] The rise of large Buddhist groups in Taiwan has fundamentally changed the outlook of traditional Buddhist monastic life. It has made it possible for large Buddhist orders to effectively intervene the political and social dynamics within a given society. The same large Buddhist orders have self-consciously taken after the established models of other religions, such as the Catholic social involvement. The Buddhist social engagement in mainland China is more delicate. In theory, humanistic Buddhism is embraced by the most Buddhists and prominent monks such as Zheng Guo, Ming Zhen, and Jing Hui are all strong advocates. However, it is difficult for Chinese Buddhist to "outdo" the ruling Chinese Communist Party in a bid for social justice since the latter's position, at least in theory, always goes further than what the Buddhists propose. Moreover, as discussed above, some governmental restrictions on religious activities are still in place that hinder the social engagement of mainland Buddhists. As a result, they are unable to do as much as their Taiwanese counterparts. Some scholars have named the Engaged Buddhism a distinct new form of Buddhism and the fourth yana.[19] While humanistic

---

[15] There are many discussions on this topic. See for instance, Sallie King, "Buddhist Social Activism," in Christopher Queen, *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*. State University of New York Press, 1996. 407pp. Also see Kenneth Kraft, "New Voices in Engaged Buddhism Studies," in Christopher Queen, *Engaged Buddhism in the West.* Wisdom Publications, 2000, 490pp.

[16] King, "Transformative Non-Violence," Kraft, "Prospects of a Socially Engaged Buddhism," in Queen 2000.

[17] Yin Shun, 77.

[18] Dong Ping. "Recent Studies on Humanistic Buddhism." http://hk.plm.org.cn/gnews/2009420/2009420121552.html, accessed on 10/11/2011.

[19] Winston L. King "Engaged Buddhism, Past, Present, Future." Eastern Buddhist, (27) 2, 1994.

Buddhism is in wide agreement with the concepts and practices of Engaged Buddhism, it is part of the Chinese Buddhist tradition in that it has been response to 20th century Chinese social and political changes. A forward looking Buddhism and yet closed tied to its traditional home, it might be appropriate to call humanistic Buddhism the 3.5th yana.

A Critical Study of Triune Vehicle of Mount Lushan Huiyuan

Shi Jingpeng (Ph.D Candidate)
Renmin University of China; Musashino University of Japan

Introduction

It is always a popular topic to talk about the difference and common ground between Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism for all the Buddhists and scholars from both traditions. Though the controversy over the superiority or legitimacy hasn't ceased, Buddhists and scholars are more and more interesting in find a way to harmonizing them. Coming to China, as we know, though we can find both Theravada (mostly in Yunnan Province) and Mahāyāna Buddhism here, still it is regarded as the representation of Mahāyāna. So it may be interesting to study the development of Theravada Buddhism in this so-called Mahāyāna country and investigate the relation between Theravada and Mahāyāna. Also, it will be important to know how Chinese monks or Buddhists think about Theravada Buddhist scriptures. In fact, in China, the attempt to harmonize Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism can date back to very early dynasties, when a lot of monks or scholars try to get rid of the problems between these two traditions, among which Mount Lushan Huiyuan (盧山慧遠), one of the great masters in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, really tried a lot to make these two traditions develop harmoniously.

So this paper will focus on Huiyuan's thoughts of the Triune Vehicle, together with which his idea about the relation between Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism was illustrated, to make clear his work of harmonizing these two traditions. Huiyuan had accepted different kind of Buddhism practices which should have determined his thought of the Triune Vehicle. His thought of the Triune Vehicle is mainly illustrated in *Ta-sheng Ta-i Chang* (大乘大义章) which is a compilation of his correspondence with Kumārajīva. In this text we would find that Huiyuan's idea of Triune Vehicle was changing all the time, especially about the differentiation between the Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism, in which he should be affected by Kumārajīva greatly. In the end of above-mentioned *Ta-sheng Ta-i Chang*, we can easily find that Huiyuan was apt to syncretize the Theravada and Mahāyāna doctrines. This tendency was explicitly expressed in his *Preface to Yoga-caryā-bhūmi Sūtra* (庐山出修行方便禅经统序) too, which is his last paper involving the Triune Vehicle. Therefore, in my opinion, although Huiyuan was influenced by Kumārajīva a lot, he was attempting to syncretize the Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism all the time, which could be proved by his Buddhist experiences.

So, in detail, in this article, firstly, I will review the existent researches or works on Huiyuan's idea about Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Secondly, the illustration in *Ta-sheng Ta-i Chang* will be studies, in order to know how he regard the relationship between them in his most important work. In the third part, I will focus on his last paper *Preface to Yoga-caryā-bhūmi Sūtra* to understand how he get rid of the problems in his later years. In the end, I will make a conclusion and outline what Huiyuan did for syncretizing Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism and why he did that. What is even more significant, I hope my research on Chinese monks' work to syncretize Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism will benefit us in modern society.

After coming to China, Buddhism had gone through different stages, by and by it was accepted by Chinese monks and people. Till now although a lot of Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhist scriptures have been translated, generally the Chinese Buddhism was still regarded as the representation of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Then actually what kind of role the Theravada Buddhism scriptures play in Chinese Buddhism. How the Chinese Buddhist monks think of the relations of Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism scriptures or what is their opinion of triune vehicle. Again, this paper will pay close attention to Mount Lushan Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle in the early Chinese Buddhism to find us an answer.

Review of Literature

About Mount Lushan Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle in the early Chinese Buddhism, there is few books researching on this topic particularly.[1] However there are some articles regarding Mount Lushan Huiyuan, within which researchers gave their ideas about Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle. The most typical opinion is from Leon Hurvitz and Ocho Enichi, both of whom think that Mount Lushan Huiyuan has an unifying thought about Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism.[2] The so-called unifying Buddhist thought means that all the Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhist scriptures are Buddha's real teachings which should be thoroughly believed in, and Theravada and Mahāyāna teachings should be interpreted mutually. On the basis of this kind of opinion, Huiyuan always interprets Mahāyāna teachings with Theravada Abhidharma teachings. Yet this makes Huiyuan very confused of many Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings sometimes.

In addition, Leon Hurvitz and Ocho Enichi also have some different opinions by their own. For example, Leon Hurvitz thinks that Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle is mostly represented by his concern of "the Buddhist practicer who observes the truth" by contrast with Kumārajīva's "the truth observed". On the other side, according to Huiyuan's later writings, Ocho Enichi thinks that Huiyuan's final understanding of Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism is not completely correct. The reason is that Huiyuan just understood the relationship between Mahāyāna and Theravada from subjective standpoint and did not get the point of the advantage of Mahāyāna over Theravada.[3] Ocho Enichi's student Kimura Sensho also has this kind of opinion that Huiyuan just understood the relationship nominally from the change of time and Buddhist monks.[4]

Almost all the above-mentioned conclusions the knid of static analysis, they did not noticed that Huiyuan was always changing his thought of triune vehicle as his correspondence with Kumārajīva went on.[5] Even when Ocho Enichi and Kimura Sensho tried to determinine the nature

1 Kamata Shigeo, General History of Chinese Buddhism,volume 2, Gaoxiong: Foguang Press, 1986.4, p394-395; Fukunaga Mitsuji, Research on the history of thought of Wei and Jin dynasty, tokyo: Iwanami Press, 2005.7, p171-178.

2 Leon. Hurvitz, The Triune Vehicle in the Correspondence of Huiyuan and Kumārajīva; Ocho Enichi, A Preface to the Study of the Correspondence of Huiyuan and Kumārajīva, both in Studies on Huiyuan-Researches, edited by Kimura Eiichi, tokyo: Sobunshya,1962.3, p169-193, p121-168.

3 Ocho Enichi, The Development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in China, Study on Chinese Buddhism, kyoto:Hozokan, 1958.1, p290-325.

4 Kimura Sensho, Buddha-view of Early Chinese Buddhism,Thought Study on Chinese Buddhism, kyoto:Hozokan, 2009.9, p39-64.

5 These correspondence was compiled as Ta-sheng ta-i chang, 大乘大义章, Chapters concerning the great doctrine of the Mahāyāna, consists of three volumes which divided into eighteen chapters. The beginning and finishing time of these correspondence maybe from 406 or 407 to 411, the year Kumārajīva died, see Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and

of his final thought of Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism, they just did it by Huiyuan's later papers of some literary and historical feature rather than theoretical analysis. So their conclusions are not very suitable to the development of Huiyuan's thought.

For these reasons, I think Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle need to be further researched from new perspective. Firstly, we should pay more attention to the change and development of Huiyuan's thought about Mahāyāna and Theravada. Secondly, we should notice and divide the different nature of Huiyuan's works. Thirdly, we need fully consider Huiyuan's overall Buddhist experiences. Based on all of these, we will discuss Huiyuan's correspondence with Kumārajīva and his later works in turn, so that we could get a more suitable and convincible conclusion about his thought of triune vehicle, and know his real idea about the relation of Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism.

Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle in Ta-sheng ta-i chang

Although there were many studies on Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle, all the former studies haven't defined what properties the study should exactly include. So at the beginning, we should firstly make an explicit definition about it. In my opinion, this kind of study should illustrate how the Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism (scriptures) come into being, what the relationship between the Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism (scriptures, practitioner) should be, what kind of attitude or standpoint toward the three vehicles is hold and also what is the reasons. On the basis of these questions, we will start our study of Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle.

As the former studies show, Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle mainly expressed in the Ta-sheng ta-i chang. Because comparing to his other works, his questions in Ta-sheng ta-i chang are much more theoretical and well-directed. But for his expression is problem-oriented, these questions could reflect the change and development of his thought rather than his sustained and final thought. But in these questions we could find that there are some factors which were revised gradually and also some factors which were never changed. Therefore, we could infer Huiyuan's final and fixed thought of triune vehicle.

By reading Ta-sheng ta-i chang, we could discover that Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle are mainly reflected in two places. The first one is his understanding of dharma-kāya of Bodhisattva. That is to say, how the dharma-kāya of Bodhisattva would generate? The second is his understanding of the relationship between Arhat, Pratyekabuddha, Bodhisattva and Buddha. Namely, how Arhat and pratyekabuddha can become Buddha, why a bodhisattva must practice all the courses of the two vehicles? How a bodhisattva would not backslide to the status of the two vehicles etc.? It is just what Leon.Hurvitz said that the aspect of "the Buddhist practicer who observes the truth".

Coming to the first aspect, Huiyuan's questions about dharma-kāya are mainly expounded in 1st-6th chapters of the first volumes of Ta-sheng ta-i chang. Among these questions, Huiyuan always wanted to interpret dharma-kāya with the four gross elements and five faculties, which shows his mix-up of dharma-kāya and rūpakāya. But the background of this kind of thought is that

translations,edited by Kimura Eiichi, tokyo:Sobunshya, 1960.11, p407. About Kumārajīva's death, see Saito Tatuya, The Date of Kumārajīva's death: A Reexamination, Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, Vol.3, 2000.3, p125-154.

he believed in all the Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhist scriptures, and he claimed the doctrines from these two schools could interpret each other without discrimination. A typical question about this in chapter 2 is as follows:

> *"Now what I (Huiyuan) want to ask you (Kumārajīva) is that, the body born of Dharma-nature (dharma-kāya) is based on a lot of marvelous activities. Expedient Means of Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra says like this, Tathāgata's body is born of marvelous activities.[6] Your answer may be just similar. Should those activities expressed in Expedient Means be the reason for the body born of Dharma-nature? If they are the preceding reasons, it must cause its result. So the question is that, do these activities fit the Dharma-nature? If they do so and don't mix up remains of defilement, the body of Dharma-nature should not be born. Please let me deduce that what are the grounds for being born, so that we can see the rule of it."[7]*

Huiyuan thought that these Marvelous activities could produce dharma-kāya. As a matter of fact, these marvelous activities are common practices for arhat and bodhisattva. So Huiyuan's deduction goes on.

> *"From unenlightened people to arhat whose last body get unimpeded, they all born of defilements which are transformed from kharma of their own. From the bodhisattva who get pure dharma-kāya to the one who will become the next Buddha, they all born with the remains of defilement(烦恼残气) which are transformed from the defilement stains of their own. From this moment on, there is no more signs of physiology... Even the bodhisattva of dharma-kāya, whose aim is to understand the Dharma-nature and based on marvelous activities, when they get born into the status of bodhisattva, they must be by means of the remains of defilement… Now what I can't understand is that if the bodhisattva already have no physical body, their present body is not like the past, so their remains of defilement should not get arisen. How should I know about it? Because the remains of defilement must get born from arhat's last body."[8]*

From this paragragh, we can see that Huiyuan thought that it is a coherent process from arhat to bodhisattva. That is to say, on the basis of the marvelous activities, arhat's last body, bodhisattva's purified body and Buddha's dharma-kāya are all born of defilement or remains of defilement. But what Huiyuan confused is that after the transformation from arhat to bodhisattva, how would the defilement generated in the past arhat's body pass on to the different bodhisattva's body.

From this question we can infer that Huiyuan thought arhat and bodhisattva were two coherent stages of Buddhism practice, the accomplishment of arhat was just the basis for bodhisattva. Even at this time Huiyuan did not mention the difference between arhat and bodhisattva, but as coherent practice process, we can see that bodhisattva' stage follows Arhat's in Huiyuan's thought. Despite all that, we could perceive that Huiyuan was attempting to syncretize the triune vehicle, which is his background as a Buddhist monk.

So we can determine some parts of Huiyuan's original thought of triune vehicle. It is that, at first he thought that all Buddhism scriptures are credible, because all of them are the teachings of Buddha. For this reason, he thought that arhat' body and bodhisattva's body should have

[6] *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*,T14,p539c.
[7] Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations,p7.
[8] Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations,p7.

the same properties, so they are two coherent stages of Buddhism practice, even bodhisattva is prior to Arhat. At this time there is no explicit differentiation between Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism in Huiyuan's standpoint. He just attempt to syncretize the Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism in order to understand the dharma-kāya which is Buddhists' ideal status.

But as his correspondence with Kumārajīva went on, Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle gradually got changed. When he ask Kumārajīva that how the Buddha could get rid of all the remains of defilement in chapter 8, he mentioned Theravada scriptures as follows:

> *"It is also like that three animals pass through the river or three men shoot the same target.*[9] *Now in Mahāyāna scriptures these differences are all removed. These parables are all in the scriptures of śrāvaka, not real intention of Mahāyāna. So I have some doubt about the teachings of [Theravada]."*[10]

So what we can find here is that Huiyuan have some doubt about the teachings of Theravada. Actually he always used "the scriptures of *śrāvaka*" in place of Theravada scriptures like this. And he used the word "scripture" (经) to call all the Buddhism texts. For example, these two parables is taken from fourteen scrolls *Vibhāṣā-śastra* (鞞婆沙论) translated by Saṃghabhadra (僧伽跋澄). At this time Huiyuan already tried to divide the Theravada and Mahāyāna scriptures before interpreting some particular doctrines. So why did he change his attitude toward the Theravada and Mahāyāna scriptures? Of course it's due to Kumārajīva's influence. In Kumārajīva's answer from chapter 2 and 5 we could see something as follows.

> *"But the Abhidharma teachings and the Mahāyāna teachings are different. For example, Kātyāyanī-putra's Abhidharma (*迦旃延《阿毗昙》*) says that the kind of illusion, dreams, sound and reflex in the mirror are visible and recognizable, which consist of three categories (*阴界入*) and belong to trayo dhātavah i.e. the three realms. But the kind of illusion and moon reflected in the water is never some determined things but delusive to our mind."*[11]

> *"What you asked about thirty-two ideas (*三十二思*) is that the disciples of Kātyāyanī-putra preached with their personal intentions, and it is not suitable to the teachings of the Buddha."*[12]

So from these paragraphs, we could see that Kumārajīva's standpoint is always on the side of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. When he answered Huiyuan's questions, he always differentiated the Theravada and Mahāyāna scriptures firstly. More than this, Kumārajīva also drew a distinction between the Theravada sutras and the Abhidharmas of *Kātyāyanī-putra* or his disciples.[13]

Huiyuan regarded the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra as the most important sutra, so he was respecting Kumārajīva very much. Therefore he had a lot of correspondence with Kumārajīva to ask the real meanings of Mahāyāna scriptures, especially about the Mahāprajnāpāramitā-śāstra (《大智度论》). Through this kind of question-and-answer communication, Huiyuan must be affected by Kumārajīva.

---

9 *Vibhāṣā-śastra*, Saṃghabhadra translated,T28, p445c.
10 Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations, p25.
11 Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations, p12.
12 Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations, p. 17.
13 Kumārajīva also maked a clear distinction between the Mahāyāna and Theravada scriptures (especially *Kātyāyanī-putra*'s Abhidharma) in these places: p. 18,26,30-31,Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations.

But although Huiyuan accepted some influence from Kumārajīva, he was always attempting to syncretize the Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism. For example in chapter 17, Huiyuan asked as follows:

> *"1. Huiyuan asked that while the Bodhisattva observes things neither dying nor being born, the practicer of Two Vehicles observes things arising and ceasing. So why the acquisition of wisdom (智) by and self-purgation（断） of the Two Vehicles to be identified with anutpattikadharmaksanti (无生法忍)?"*[14]

As the text shows, firstly Huiyuan maked a distinction between the Bodhisattva Vehicle and the Two Vehicles, especially on the aspect of doctrines. Secondly, he asked the relationship between the acquisition of wisdom by and self-purgation of the Two Vehicles and anutpattikadharmaksanti of the Boddhisattva.

Furthermore, Huiyuan continued to ask about the relationship between these two things.

> *"6. Huiyuan asked again, the Mahāprajnāpāramitā-śāstra says that all the acquisition of wisdom by and self-purgation of the four stages of śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha etc. are identified with anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti of the Bodhisattva. Inferring from this text, I think that maybe the Bodhisattva practice the acquisition of wisdom by and self-purgation of the Two Vehicles in order to achieve his anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti. But these Three Vehicles are originally of different nature, so how does the Bodhisattva achieve the anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti? If it must rely on the practicing of those teachings of the Two Vehicles, then there should not be any Bodhisattva who suddenly achieved the anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti in the Buddha's meeting. That is what I deduct, but I am always feeling suspicious of it."*[15]

At this time Huiyuan already began to make a distinction between the Three Vehicles of his own free will. But despite all that Huiyuan still wanted to interpret some Mahāyāna doctrines with teachings of the Two Vehicles. Maybe in his mind, even Theravada and Mahāyāna Buddhism are different in the initial doctrines and the practitioner's capacity[16], but both of them, same as Buddhism, should have some connection between some particular doctrines. Therefore eventually Huiyuan's standpoint is that he stand on the side of the Mahāyāna Buddhism to syncretize the Theravada Buddhism. Even in the last question in chapter 17, Huiyuan still asked about the relationship between the Śrāvaka Vehicle and the Bodhisattva Vehicle, taking it for granted there are some thing in common between the two things.

> *"10. Huiyuan asked again… if 'perception' (证) is the removing of defilement, then after the removing of tri-saṃyojana (i.e. satkāya-dṛṣṭi-saṃyojana, śīla-vrata-parāmarśa-saṃyojana and vicikitsā-saṃyojana) will be Srota-āpanna, after the removing of pañca-avara-bhāgīyā-saṃyojana will be Anāgāmin, after the removing of both pañca-avara-bhāgīyā-saṃyojana and pañca-ūrdhva-bhāgīya- saṃyojana will be Arhat. If all the above three defilements are removed and the Bodhisattva are no longer in the three realms of saṃsarā, then there should be some same and different part of the Three Vehicles. So what is the different part? If in the Bodhisattva's practices he firstly do the same part then*

[14] Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations,p46.

[15] Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations,p49.

[16] About it, besides 1 and 6, also showed in Huiyuan's questions 3, 4 and 10 of chapter 17, Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations, p.47, 48, 53-54.

> *the different, it is the Theravada first and Mahāyāna second. If he firstly do the different part then the same, it is the Mahāyāna first and Theravada second. If there are neither the same nor the different part between the Three Vehicles, then it will go against your answers."*[17]

Here Huiyuan asked about what is the difference between "perception" and "the acceptance of perception". Actually there is no difference here. In this text we could see that Huiyuan thought that the removing of defilement is perception, so at this point he thought that the Three Vehicles should have same part among the Buddhist practices. Based on that he thought the Three Vehicles are one continuous interconnecting practice process.

From the above, we could see that in Ta-sheng Ta-i Chang, Huiyuan's thought of the Triune Vehicle was changing all the time. He gradually recognized the differentiation between the Three Vehicles by being affected by Kumārajīva. Although he had already known the difference of doctrines and practitioner's capacity between the Three Vehicles, he still attempted to syncretize them. At this time Huiyuan's standpoint of Triune Vehicle is very explicit, that is he stand on the side of the Mahāyāna Buddhism but the Theravada scriptures was deemed very importa

Huiyuan's thought of triune vehicle in Preface to *Yoga-caryā-bhūmi Sūtra* at Mount Lushan

The same idea of Huiyuan was existing all long, for example in his the Preface to *Yoga-caryā-bhūmi Sūtra* at Mount Lushan (Lushan Chu Fangbian Chanjing Tongxu 庐山出方便禅经统序)[18] he said as follows.

> *"when the Tathāgata got nirvāṇa, Ānanda passed this Yoga-caryā-bhūmi Sūtra (修行方便禅经) on to Madhyāntika，and Madhyāntika to Śaṇavāsin. These three arhats all cherished the profound vow and deeply fit the Buddha's teaching. If there are some remarks of theirs which were not found in the Buddha's scriptures, they must be suitable to the Buddha's hidden meanings without any differentiation. After then a person by the name of Upagupta… he only attached importance to the significant parts of the eighty thousands of dharma-treasure. From then on Buddhism became to be divided into five sects… Therefrom some people in the five Buddhism sects felt the vicissitude of the world, and they always were yearning for the classical scriptures. Afraid that the teachings of the Buddha would vanish away, these practitioners sighed with deep emotion then began to state and commend the sutra of dhyāna respectively, in order to make the Buddhism prosperous. As their teachings with infinite expedient means, they tried to pursue the silent thing which is the one and the only rule. But many practitioners sought the root from branches and few ones found the essence from the basis. Somebody tried to attain it but failed, and somebody kept to their own things without changes. Therefore Buddhism scriptures commend the great merit of Pūrṇa (富楼那) and advocate the universal respect behavior of Sadāparibhūta bodhisattva (常不轻菩萨). Originally the Buddha's real teachings are not only preserving its advantages but also keep its disadvantages. In such a way the five Buddhism sects*

[17] Id. pp. 53-54.

[18] This Preface should be written at the year of 411 or 412, four or five years before Huiyuan's death. This is the last article in which Huiyuan set forth the relationship of the Three Vehicles. In his actual last article, Fo Ying Ming (佛影铭) there is no mention of the Three Vehicles.

relied on the practitioners respectively while the practitioners could not succeed to the precursors, so the teachings got flourished or discarded. Because the teachings were sometimes out of use, sometimes of use, the position of different sects got up and down. Therefore the name of Theravada and Mahāyānan should get determined in such a manner… This Sūtra came from Dharmatrāta and Buddhasena who were outstanding masters of dhyāna practice in Western Regions. They collected important Buddhist scriptures and vigorously preached the Mahāyāna Buddhism."[19]

From this text, we could infer three points about Huiyuan's thought of the Triune Vehicle. Firstly, Huiyuan thought this Sūtra was a Mahāyāna scripture which actually was a Theravada scripture with some Mahāyāna characters.[20] Therefore Huiyuan did not make a distinction between the Three Vehicles on dhyāna practice.

Secondly, Huiyuan tactfully criticized the breakup of Buddhism. That means Huiyuan already recognized some teachings of different Buddhist sects was not very suitable. He thought we should unify the Buddhism on the basis of dhyāna and prajñāpāramitā which was the fundamentality of Buddhism.

Thirdly, Huiyuan thought that both the Theravada and Mahāyāna doctrines should be advocated. Therefore he commend the merit of both Pūrṇa and Sadāparibhūta bodhisattva. The former was praised by the Buddha as Most eminent in ability to explain the dharma while the later was typical image of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore although Huiyuan probably had accepted the influence from Kumārajīva that not all abhidharma teachings are suitable to the Buddha's real meaning, he still respected the abhidharma teachings very much.

For these reasons, I think that the opinions of Ocho Enichi and Kimura Sensho are not very suitable. I think that Huiyuan not only mastered the nominal difference between the Three Vehicles, but also understand their nature; but he still attempted to syncretize them, because he thought that Buddhism was originally one without many sects and discriminations. So he wanted to pursue unifying Buddhism.

Conclusion

Now we have got a rough browse on Mount Lushan Huiyuan's thought of the Triune Vehicle. Through the correspondence with Kumārajīva, Huiyuan's thought was continuing to change. At the beginning he did not notice the differentiation between the Theravada and Mahāyāna scriptures. He just think that the Buddhism should have a continuous theory. But as time went on, Huiyuan began to make a distinction between the Mahāyāna and Theravada scriptures voluntarily and accepted Kumārajīva's opinion about the differences of the Three Vehicles. From then on, although Huiyuan had understood it but he still attempted to pursue a continuous unifying Buddhism which is based on dhyana and prajnāpāramitā. The reason for this kind of his intention can be well understood by inspection of Huiyuan's Buddhist experience.

[19] Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations, p101-102.

[20] See Ando Toshio, Huiyuan's Thinking with Respect to Dhyana, Studies on Huiyuan-Texts and translations, p249-285.

When Huiyuan attend a Mahāprajnāpāramitā-śāstra lecture of Dao-an (道安) he made up his mind to be a Buddhist monk under the complete tutelage of Dao-an. Like his Master, Huiyuan's Buddhist practice stood on two feet, one of them being the study of the doctrinal content of the Mahāyāna prajnāpāramitā-śāstra, the other being the practice of dhyana according to prescriptions contained in the Theravada scriptures translated by the Theravada missionary An Shigao (安世高). But Huiyuan also attached great importance to the Mahāyāna dhyāna teachings translated by Lokakṣema (Zhi Chen,支讖). For example, he had inquired into the doctrines of Samādhi of Buddha Recitation. For these reasons he paid much attention to *Yoga-caryā-bhūmi Sūtra,* because this Sutra of a mixture of both the Theravada and Mahāyāna teachings is very suitable to his experiences. So these activities determined Huiyuan's standpoint of the Triune Vehicle.

Buddhist Deccan Inscriptions & Their Philosophical Influence: with Special Reference to the Cetika/Cetiya & Aparsaila/Aparseliya Schools

Dr. Pallavi Jambhale
K.J. Somaiya Center for Buddhist Studies

Introduction:

The word Deccan is used to denote the region between River Narmada and River Krishna. Scholars like James Burgess, Percy Brown, R.G. Bhandarkar, V.V. Mirashi, Shobhana Gokhale, Vidya Dahejia, S. Nagraju, Ajaymitra Shastri etc., had worked a lot on various aspects of the different sources. They have contributed a lot in framing the History of Buddhism of this particular region.

Buddhism was introduced in Deccan in the time of Asoka. *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* state that third Buddhist Council was held in the reign of Asoka. Mogaliputta Tissa was its president. After the Council Mahasthavira Tissa sent monks for preaching Buddhism in different part. *Dipavamsa* states that Mahadharmarakshita was sent to Maharashtra[1].

As Buddhism spread in Deccan and the number of Buddhist monks increased, the need of *Vihara*s for their residence, of *Caitya*s for their prayers and of *Stupa*s for their worship began to be felt, and they were excavated and carved in the hills of Deccan. Gautamiputra Satakarni, Pulumavi, Yajna Satakarni and some other Satavahana kings got caves excavated and donated them to the monks at Nasik, Kanheri, Karle and other places. So did also their feudatories and Zamindars and also commoners patronise Buddhism in the two or three centuries before and after Christ. Still Deccan is very rich in Buddhist monuments. There are number of Buddhist monuments of ancient times spread all over this region like Ajanta, Nagarjunakonda, Karle, Bhaje etc. These were the very important centres in ancient times which had played a very important role in the growth and development of Buddhism and are still playing important role as a source of History of Buddhism.

Contemporary Epigraphical evidences in the different Buddhist Caves show that different sects flourished in different area of Deccan. *Cetika* or *Cetiya* School is mentioned at Amaravati[2] and also in the Nasik Cave. *Aparasaila* School is mentioned in the Nagarjunakonda[3] and Kanheri.

Vinitadeva and the author of the Bhiksuvarsagraprccha divided the eighteen sects in to five group thus mentions Schools of *Mahasanghika* comprising *Purvasaila* and *Aparasaila*.[4] Taranath in his 42nd Chapter has identified the different names of schools in the lists of Bhavya, Vasumitra, Vinitadeva and others and identified *Cetiya* School (*Cetiya – Purvasaila* - Schools of Mahadeva)[5]

---

1 *Dipavamsa*, ed. by Ramkumara Tripathi, Varanasi,1996, pg. 122, 8.8
2 Epigraphica Indica, X, Luders list pg. 143,147, also on 148.
3 Ibid, XX pg.17, 21
4 Dutt, Nalinaksha, Buddhist Sects in India, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1978, Pg. 49
5 Ibid.

Though influence of different schools of Buddhism can be seen in inscriptional evidences it will be difficult to say that particular area had an influence of particular school or particular school influenced the architecture of the cave.

In this paper I intend to study , whether the school of *Cetiya* and *Aparasaila* which are found in inscriptions at Rock-cut caves of Kanheri near Mumbai and Nasik 172 km from Mumbai in the present day Maharashtra state had influenced the Rock-cut architecture.

About Satavahana Dynasty

Among the dynasties, which rose into prominence in Trans-Vindhyan India during the Post-Mauryan period, the Satavahanas, who ruled for nearly three to Four Centuries became very prominent and their contribution to the political and socio-religious history of India was significant. The date of the commencement of the 'Satavahana' rule in the Deccan forms one of the most debated and yet unsettled problems of ancient Indian history, while some historians are inclined to place this event sometimes in the latter half of the third C.B.C. , soon after the Asoka. Others relate it to about the middle or the latter half of the 1st C.B.C. The Capital of the Satavahana Empire was Pratisthan which has been identified with Paithan on the bank of Godavari River in Aurangabad District of Maharashtra. They ruled Deccan until 2nd -3rd Cent. A.D.

About the Cetika/Cetiya School and Aparsaila School:

Dipavamsa[6] and *Mahavamsa*[7] mention these sects of Buddhism. Xuan Xang the Chinese traveller who visited India during 7th C.A.D. also recorded in his account a convent called *Aparasaila* near Dhenukakata in Andhra Pradesh.[8] The First Epoch- Sinhalese traditions in the *Dipavamsa* (4th Cent. A.D.) Buddhaghosa in his introduction to the commentary on the Kathavatthu added six sects to the list of *Dipavamsa*, viz. *Rajagrikas, Siddhatthikas, Pubbaseliyas, Aparaseliyas, Haimavata* and *Vajiriya*, grouping the first four under the *Andhakas.*[9]

Taranath in his 42nd Chapter furnishes us with very important identifications of the different names of the schools appearing in the lists of Bhavya, Vasumitra, Vinitadeva and others. After reproducing the several lists, he gives the following identifications[10]:

---

6 Dipavamsa, Bauddha Aakar Granthamala pushpa - 6, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi, 1996., Pg.70.
चेतयिा च पुनवादी महसङ्गतिभिदका|
पञ्च वादा इमे सब्बे महासङ्गितमिूलका||

7 Mahavamsa, Bauddha Aakar Granthamala pushpa - 7, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi, 1996., Pg.56.
5.5 गोकुलकिहि पिण्णत्तविादा बाहुलकिा पि चि|
चेतयि wadawawa वादा तेस्वे व समहासङ्घकिा छ ते||
5.12 हेमवता राजगरियिा तथा सद्धि्त्थका पचि|
पुब्बसेलयिभक्खिू च तथा अपरसेलयिा||

8 Watters Thomas, On Yuan Chwang's travels in India, II, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996, Pg.217.

9 Dutt Nalinaksha, Op.cit., Pg.48.

10 Ibid, Pg.49.

1. *Kasyapiya-Suvarska*
2. *Samkrantivadin- Uttariya- Tamrasatiya*.
3. *Cetiya-Purvasaila*- Schools of Mahadeva.
4. *Lokottaravada-Kakkutika*.
5. *Ekavyavaharika* is a general name of the *Mahasanghika*s

School called *Cetiyaka* or *Cetiyavada*, is a subdivision of the *Mahasanghika*. It is said that the sect is so named because of a *Caitya* situated on a mountain where its founder Mahadeva lived, and secondly due to its emphasis on the erection, decoration and worship of the *Caitya*s[11]. It is also said that the *Cetiyakas* and *Lokottarvadins* are identical, Vasumitra and Bhavya agree with Kathavatthu as far as the three sub-divisions are concerned if the name *Cetiya* be regarded as alternative to *Lokottaravada.*[12] In Mahavastu which is an avowed text of *Lokottaravada*, a branch of the *Mahasanghika*s, worship of *Caitya*s is given prominence.[13] The *Mahasanghika*s, Ekavyavaharikas and *Cetiyakas* (or *Lokottaravadins*) had generally common doctrines with minor differences, which have not been minutely distinguished by Vasumitra. *Lokottaravadins* developed leanings towards Mahayanist, and in fact prepared the ground for the advent of the Mahayana school.[14] The *Lokottara* conception appears only in the introductory portion of the Mahavastu, and so it is evident that the text was originally [*Theravadic*] and that, in course of time, the introductory chapters were added by the *Lokottaravadins.*[15]

According to *Lokottaravada* all worldly (*laukika*) dharmas are unreal; the real dharmas are supra-mundane. *Mahasanghika*s like *Theravadins* or *Sarvastivadins* did not conceived Buddha as a human being who attained perfection (Buddhahood) and became omniscient at Bodhgaya.[16] They attributed to Gautama Buddha not only supra-mundane existence but also all perfections and omniscience from his so-called birth in the womb of Queen Maya and not from his attainment of Bodhi at Bodh Gaya. And they regarded Buddha transcendental.[17]

The *Cetiyavadins* are known to have been flourishing in Andhradesa contemporaneously. In the *Kathavatthu*, the views discussed are mostly of the *Mahasanghika*s who migrated to the south, settled down in the Andhra Pradesh around Amravati and Dhanyakataka[18]. These were the *Pubbaseliyas* or *Uttaraseliyas*, *Aparaseliyas*, *Siddhatthikas, Rajagirikas* and *Cetiyakas*, collectively designated as the *Andhakas* by Buddhaghosa in the introduction to this commentary on the Kathavatthu.[19]

Aparaseliya is one of the sects well-known from the contemporary inscriptions of the Krishna valley. In the Pali tradition the Pubba and Apara Seliyas are mentioned as two subdivisions of the *Mahasanghika* School. *Aparaseliya* is also considered to be one of the four sects of the *Andhaka* branch[20].

---

11 Nagaraju S., Buddhist Architecture of Western India, Agama Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1981, Pg.34.
12 Dutt, Nalinaksha, op.cit, Pg.57
13 Ibid, Pg.57.
14 Ibid., Pg.64.
15 Ibid, Pg.76
16 Ibid, Pg.72.
17 Ibid, Pg.73
18 Ibid, Pg.65
19 Ibid, Pg.65
20 Nagraju S., Op.cit., Pg.34

List Of Inscriptions

Dr. Nalinaksha Dutt in his book *Buddhist Sects of India* has furnished the tabular statement of the geographical distribution of the several schools on the basis of inscription[21]:

1. ***Aparaseliya* (Luders, 1020) - Kanheri Cave Inscription:** M.G. Dixit was the first to point out the occurrence of the name of this sect in a Kanheri inscription of the 3rd Cent. A.D[22]. This inscription mentions a cave and water cistern the gift of the nun Sapa the daughter of the lay-worshipper Kulapiya Dhamanak the inhabitant of Dhenukakata, the female pupil of the Thera Bhadanta Bodhika, together with her sister Ratinika and other relatives, to the congregation of monks of the four quarters.[23]

2. ***Cetika* (Luders, 1130) - Nasik Cave Inscription:** Gift of a cave by Mugudasa of the lay community of *Cetika*s and of a field in western (aparili) Kanhahini to this cave for providing clothes to the ascetic by Dhamanamdin son of the lay worshipper Bodhigupta.[24]

Architecture of Nasik Cave 9 and Kanheri Cave 65:

Caitya: an ancient Sanskrit *term meaning* "shrine." In early Buddhism, *Caitya* and *Stupa* were often used as synonyms in inscriptions and literature etymologically. *Caitya* derives from the root 'cit' meaning 'to collect' in Sanskrit. It can be understood as the place of meeting of disciples for prayers. The term '*Stupa*' is used to signify funerary monuments whereas *Caitya* conveys a sense very akin to that of shrine.[25] According to Coomarswamy "The general meaning of word *Caitya:* ci is something built or piled up, the related derivative citta referring to the altar or fire altar. The term '*Vihara*' derives from the root 'vi + har' meaning 'to stay'= abode, place of stay.

Cave 9[26] (Nasik):

Close to Cave 8 is this lena or *Vihara* with a peculiar plan. Originally this was a simple lena with two cells, one behind the other, and a veranda. Later however the left wall in the veranda was cut further and a cell in the side-wall and another in the back-wall were added in the extended portion. All the cells have recess-benches. The doorways of the cells are narrow simple rectangular openings with notched corners for the wooden frame. The front portion of the original veranda has two pillars in antis. The pillars are octagonal shafts without base, but have pot-capitals and inverted stepped hour-glass decoration. The architrave above these is heavy and in its front face above each of the pillars and pilasters there is the carving of a sculpture with addorsed animals carrying riders. These, however appear not to be part of the original design; there are no sculptures on the inner side of the architrave.

[21] Dutt, Nalinaksha, op.cit, Pg.52.
[22] Dixit M.G. Indian Historical Quarterly, XVIII, 1942,Pg.60
[23] Epigraphica Indica, Vol X, ASI, Delhi, pg. 107.
[24] Ibid., Vol X, ASI, Delhi, pg. 125.
[25] Sarcar H., Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture, 1966. Pg.5
[26] Nagraju S., Op. cit., Pg.265.

Kanheri Cave 65 [27]

This is also a *Vihara* and cell hall type cave with an additional cell hall complex in the courtyard. There are two water cisterns in recesses in the open courtyard both are along right wall. Along the left wall, in open court, we have a simple bench adjacent to the entrance of the cell hall complex. In the rectangular veranda, on the either end of the opening, we have two octagonal pillars and two square pilasters with the hourglass motif. The veranda has bench in the left end.

Conclusion:

In the Age of Satavahanas the *Theravada* Buddhism had spread in South India. So the object of worship in the caves of the time was the *Stupa*, not the image of the Buddha. Later, the Mahayana came into limelight, which led to the worship of images.

Though both *Cetiyaka* and *Aparasaila* did not receive much attention from the Buddhist writers the inscriptions show that the sect won a great popularity in Deccan. Or otherwise the cave-temples could not have been donated. Its richness and existence prove that there was a series of donors during Satavahana period anxious to express their religious zeal and devotion to these schools in the best way that their resources could provide.

Contemporary epigraphical evidences in the different Buddhist Caves show that different sects flourished in different area of Deccan like *Bhadrayaniya*, *Dharmottariya* etc. *Cetika* or *Cetiya* school is mentioned at Amaravati.[28] *Aparasaila* school is mentioned in the Nagarjunakonda.[29] *Mahasanghika* was also popular during this period. There was another center of the school at Karle, near Mumbai, famous for the largest and finest cave temple there are two inscriptions, one recording the gift of the village Karajaka by Gautamiputra Satakarni to the monks of the Valuraka caves for the support of the monks of *Mahasanghika* sect.[30]

We can find at the same place in Nasik Cave 3 inscription dated 2nd C.A.D. cave donated to *Bhadrayaniya* sect.[31] Same way at the Kanheri also in Cave 3 we can see the cave donated to *Bhadrayaniya* sect.[32] *Bhadrayaniya* school belongs to the Sthaviravada. Then why at the same place the caves were donated to different schools.

If we study the architecture we can see that both the caves which we have studied in this paper are Viharas. *Cetiyakas* worshipped *Caitya*. But inscriptions are found at Nasik and Kanheri are in Vihara. The Amravati and Nagarjunakonda where other inscriptions of *Cetika* and *Aparaseliya* schools are found during the same period belongs to Structural architecture. Whereas in Nasik and Kanheri they are Rock-cut caves. So we can’t say that particular school had impact on the Buddhist Architecture of the same period.

---

27 Pandit Suraj: Religious Development of Buddhism as Understood through the Art of Kanheri. Ph.D. Thesis submitted to University of Mumbai in the year 2004.

28 Epigraphica Indica, X, Luders list pg. 143, 147, also on 148.

29 Ibid., XX pg.17, 21

30 Ibid., VII, pg.64.

31 Mirashi V.V., Op. cit., Pg.41; also Luders List 1123.

32 Epigraphica Indica, X, Luders list pg.102 &107.

Contemporary epigraphical evidence shows that different sects flourished like *Mahasanghikas, Dhammottariyas, Cetikiyas and Purvasailas* etc., during this period. This period was considered as a transitional phase. So far many stalwarts have studied the different aspects such as chronology, architecture and epigraphy. Still it is difficult to say that philosophy of these schools had influenced the architecture. Hypothetically I can say that though these cave at Nasik donated to *Cetiyaka* and cave of Kanheri to *Aparasaila* Sect of Buddhism but its philosophy had not influenced the architecture of the cave. But the inscriptions mention that these caves were donated to this sect. Then why it was donated? My humble opinion is that these donations must have made particularly for congregation of the monks or for their vassavasa. Therefore, we find the names of the different schools mentioned at the same place. This shows definitely the trend of unification of different schools in Deccan in this particular period.

Bibliography:

Bhandarkar R.G., *Early History of the Dekkan - Down to the Mohomedan Conquest*, Bhartiya Publishing House, Varanasi, 1975.

Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan series.

Burgess J. & Bhagwanlal Indraji, *Inscription from the Cave Temples of Western India (Archaeological survey of Western India)*, Indian , Delhi, 1976.

Burgess J., *Archaeological Survey of Western India Vol. IV, Report on Buddhist Cave Temples & their Inscriptions*, The Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1994.

Dipavamsa, Bauddha Aakar Granthamala pushpa - 6, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi, 1996.

Dipavamsa, ed. by Ramkumara Tripathi, Varanasi, 1996,

Dutt, Nalinaksha, Buddhist Sects in India, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1978.

Epigraphica Indica. ASI, Delhi.

Mahavamsa, Bauddha Aakar Granthamala pushpa - 7, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi, 1996.

Mirashi V.V., *The History and Inscriptions of Satavahana and Kshatrapas*, Maharashtra state Board for Literature and Culture, Bombay, 1981

Nagaraju S., Buddhist Architecture of Western India, Agama Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1981, Pg. 34.

Pandit Suraj, Religious Development of Buddhism as Understood through the Art of Kanheri. Ph.D. Thesis submitted to University of Mumbai in the year 2004.

Sarcar H., Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture, 1966. Pg.5

Shastri Ajay Mitra, *The Satavahanas and The Western Kshatrapas - A Historical Framework*, Dattsons, Nagpur, 1998.

Watters Thomas, On Yuan Chwang's travels in India, II, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996.

Journal:

Indian Historical Quarterly

Dharmic Views and Dharmic Practices

Asst. Prof. Hsiao-Lan Hu, Ph.D.
Department of Religious Studies, and
Women's and Gender Studies Program
University of Detroit Mercy, U.S.A.

Many people, both Buddhists and non-Buddhists, naively assume there is only one Buddhism. Non-Buddhists often do so out of ignorance of the diversity existing in Buddhist circles, and Buddhists often do so because they assume the tradition they are following is the authentic Buddhism, or it represents the true spirit or the complete form of the Buddha's teachings. Studying Buddhism in the United States where all traditions of Buddhism can be found, I have heard many people willfully ignore the differences among Buddhist traditions and claim the tradition they know of to be the one true Buddhism. For example, I have encountered a Pure Land Buddhist who, upon learning that I studied the *Nikāya*-s, questioned why I would waste time studying the Theravada texts instead of focusing on the 'true spirit' of Buddhism, that is: Mahāyāna. Similarly, some Vajrayānist friends wondered why I did not devote my life to Vajrayāna practice given that as a scholar I should have "known better" and recognized that it was in Vajrayāna that the Buddha's teaching reached its complete form. Meanwhile, I continue to hear comments from people whose first encounter with Buddhism was a demystified, ascetic-bent version of Theravāda, comments such as "you Chinese people just like to mix traditions together; Chinese Buddhism is not pure Buddhism" or "I don't care about culture; I only care about what the Buddha said; Buddhism is what the Buddha actually said, and Japanese Buddhism is just culture." It seems that people who recognize only one Buddhism inevitably elevate one tradition at the expense of all other traditions.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are people who recognize the existence and value of many different forms of Buddhism and in fact magnify the cultural variations to the extent of asserting that there are many "buddhisms," each of which makes sense in its own culture and is incommensurable with another. In this approach, Buddhism is what the local culture makes it to be, and Buddhists of one culture have no ground evaluating the views and practices of Buddhists of another culture, just as the followers of one religion have no business judging the followers of another religion. Being a person whose academic training and teaching career involve religious pluralism and global ethics, this cultural relativist approach is appealing and troubling at the same time. On the one hand, this approach affirms all vehicles of Buddhism and avoids the pitfall of privileging one Buddhist tradition while disparaging others. On the other hand, differences are so amplified and reified in this relativist approach that it becomes meaningless to even ask whether or not a view or practice is Buddhist when the understanding is there are many Buddhisms.

Is there one Buddhism or many? What is Buddhist and what is not? Buddhists generally hold that the Buddha's teachings are universal, but is that universality predicated on uniformity? Reversely, does the acknowledgment and acceptance of diverse traditions mean that no view or practice can be recognized as Buddhist by all Buddhists? Is it possible to find or construct any unifying principle without elevating a certain tradition and dismissing all others? Would such a unifying view necessarily impose an unrealistic and unwanted uniformity on diverse Buddhist

traditions? Well in accordance with the Buddha's teachings, I will argue that Buddhist traditions, as all phenomena in the world, are neither one nor many, neither uniform nor completely different. By referencing the *Nikāya*-s in the Pāli Canon, I will attempt to show that certain views are indeed at the core of the Buddha's teachings and thus can be identified as the unifying views of Buddhism. The unifying views, paradoxically, allow and even require huge diversity.

My choice of citing the *Nikāya*-s does not indicate any endorsement of the claim made by some Theravādins and scholars of Theravāda that Theravāda Buddhism is the "authentic" or "pure" Buddhism that has preserved the Buddha's original teachings without change. Rather, the choice is made based on the practicality of searching for unifying views that are genuinely unifying. Theravādins generally consider the Pāli Canon to be the authentic teaching of the Buddha and remain suspicious of many of the texts preserved in the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna collections. Mahāyānists and Vajrayānists, on the other hand, generally do not question the legitimacy of the Pāli Canon, even though they may consider their respective tradition to be the superior and ultimate form of Buddhism and may consider the Pāli Canon a product of the Buddha's "skillful means" that caters to people of lesser capacities.[1] That is, Buddhists across traditions recognize early Buddhist literature as the basic and foundational texts of Buddhism, and more often than not they "see themselves as directly in the line of that early Buddhism."[2] More importantly, various forms of "Modern Buddhism," such as the multiple strains of "Engaged Buddhism" taking place simultaneously in different regions, east and west, "Critical Buddhism" in Japan, "Buddhism for the Human Realm" in Taiwan, and numerous Western Buddhist sanghas, all see themselves as a return to the Buddhist *Dhamma* practiced at the time of the historical Buddha and all appeal to the early Buddhist literature.[3] Therefore, for any view to be recognized as being in accordance with the *Buddhadharma* by Buddhists across traditions, it has to be supported by texts that all Buddhists would consider basic and foundational.

---

[1] In the Pāli Canon, the term *upāya-kosalla* (Sanskrit: *upāya-kauśalya*), commonly translated as "skillful means" or "expedient means," occurs infrequently and simply denotes the Buddha's marvelous skills in expounding the *Dhamma*. In Mahāyāna texts, by contrast, the term has mainly been used to claim Mahāyāna's superiority to all older non-Mahāyānist schools. The followers of those schools might believe they had received and practiced the authentic, ultimate *Dhamma* directly from the Buddha. The early Mahāyānists, however, contend that the historical Buddha lied about the ultimacy, and the older teachings were in fact limited and restricted, for they were tailored for the early followers who were of more selfish inclinations and/or lesser spiritual potentials. At a glance, this Mahāyānist claim might seem to be disparaging of the Buddha (not to say disparaging of all older schools and all early followers), for it seems to accuse the Buddha of breaking the precept of no lying. In the Mahāyānist rendition, nonetheless, the seemingly morally wrong act of lying is in fact the Buddha's *upāya* for the purpose of convincing selfish people of lesser capacities to follow his teachings. By dismissing all older schools as the results of the Buddha's *upāya*, the early Mahāyānists branded them "Hīnayāna," the Small Raft, and considered itself providing "Mahāyāna," the Great Raft, an vehicle that is big enough to transport all sentient beings from the shore of endless suffering to the far-shore of *nibbāna*. Modern-day Mahāyānists who have been educated in Buddhist history do not hold this assumption any more, and yet less educated ones still commonly assume that Theravādins are the same as "Hīnayānists" and that "Hīnayānists" lack compassionate consideration for others. For the meaning of *upāya*, see Damien Keown, comp, *A Dictionary of Buddhism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 318. **Editor's Footnote:** Since the disparaging term has been rendered obsolete since 1950, it's disparaging to continue to try to use it, even ever-so slyly. Please review the landmark decision to eliminate the derogatory term, from the 1950 World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference, spearheaded by the effort of Ven. Rapule Rahula – see, for instance, this – accessed on 17 November 2011: http://www.chuadieuphap.us/English_Section/essays/rahula_theravada_mahayana.asp

[2] Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 30.

[3] See Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Modern Buddhism: Readings for the Unenlightened* (London: Penguin Books, 2002); Scott Pacey, "A Buddhism for the Human World: Interpretations of Renjian Fojiao in Contemporary Taiwan,"*Asian Studies Review* 29 (March 2005): 61–77.

The singular goal of the Buddha's teaching is *nibbāna*, the cessation of *dukkha*. Therefore, a view or practice that is not conducive to the cessation or alleviation of *dukkha* is not worth endeavoring for Buddhists, let alone holding onto.[4] That is, according to the Buddhist *Dhamma*, the cessation of *dukkha*, rather than group identity or cultural boundary, is the criterion for adopting a view or practice. The Buddha on numerous occasions discouraged his followers from dogmatically clinging to philosophical views or religious doctrines. In the *Anguttara Nikāya*, for instance, the Buddha said that religions came into dispute with one another "because of lust for views, because of adherence, bondage, greed, obsession and cleaving to views."[5] In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha said it was in terms of not propounding "full understanding of clinging to views" and not propounding "full understanding of clinging to rules and observances" that a teaching would be "unemancipating" and "unconducive to peace."[6] Even when talking about his own teaching, the Buddha cautioned against clinging and then reiterated that the purpose of imparting or learning or practicing the *Dhamma* was emancipation and cessation of *dukkha*; the goal was NOT to accredit oneself or one's group with authority or superiority:[7]

> Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is *dukkha* and the cessation of *dukkha*. If others abuse, revile, scold, and harass the Tathāgata for that, the Tathāgata on that account feels no annoyance, bitterness, or dejection of the heart. And if others honour, respect, revere, and venerate the Tathāgata for that, the Tathāgata on that account feels no delight, joy, or elation of the heart."[8]

And the Buddha went on to suggest that his listeners adopt the same attitude. He taught the *Dhamma* in order to cease *dukkha*, not to provide an anchor for identity clinging or any form of self-absorbed dejection or elation. And his followers were instructed to do the same.

The Buddha likened his *Dhamma* to a raft, which was built solely for the purpose of crossing a great expanse of dangerous water and reaching the far shore that was safe and free from fear. He asked his listeners to reason about the proper use of the raft:

> By doing what would that man be doing what should be done with that raft? Here, bhikkhus, when that man got across and had arrived at the far shore, he might think thus: "…Suppose I were to haul it onto the dry land or set it adrift in the water, and then go wherever I want." Now, bhikkhus, it is by so doing that that man would be doing what should be done with that raft. So I have shown you how the *Dhamma* is similar to a raft, being for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping.

---

4 Sallie B. King, *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press), 80-2; Santikaro Bhikkhu, "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Life and Society through the Natural Eyes of Voidness," in *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, edited by Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 156-57; Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, 3rd edition (Bombay, India: Siddharth Publications, 1984), 254-5; Phra Prayudh Payutto, *Buddhadhamma: Natural Laws and Values for Life*, translated by Grant A. Olson (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 85-6 and 165.

5 *Anguttara Nikāya*, II.iv.6.

6 *Majjhima Nikāya*, i.66-67 (*Cūlasīhanāda Sutta*).

7 The same point is noted by Bhikkhu Chao Chu in "Buddhism and Dialogue Among the World Religions: Meeting the Challenge of Materialistic Skepticism," in *Ethics, Religion, and the Good Society: New Directions in a Pluralistic World*, edited by Joseph Runzo (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 170-71.

8 *Majjhima Nikāya*, i.140 (*Alagaddūpama Sutta*); see also *Samyutta Nikāya*, III.119 (*Khandhasamyutta*).

> Bhikkhus, when you know the *Dhamm*a to be similar to a raft, you should abandon even the teachings, how much more so things contrary to the teachings.[9]

The Buddha gave teachings for people to practice and utilize so that *dukkha* would cease in their lives. The teachings in and of themselves were not meant to be sacred or inalterable. They could be abandoned, as the simile showed, once they served the purpose of transporting people across the *dukkha*-filled body of water. In fact, they *should* be abandoned if they did not help alleviate *dukkha* or, worse, ended up producing more of it.

Having the cessation of *dukkha* as the criterion also means that a teaching helpful in removing *dukkha* from life should be learned and put into practice, even if it was not given by the Buddha or a Buddhist master in one's own tradition. In the famous *Kālāma Sutta*, the Buddha taught his followers not to cling to or dismiss a teaching on account of the identity, lineage, school, or denomination of the teacher.[10] Whether a teaching is to be accepted and practiced depends on whether it is conducive to the cessation of *dukkha*. Whether or not the teaching is popular or the norm in one's own philosophical, religious, ethnic, social, or cultural group is ultimately irrelevant.

What kind of views and practices would be considered conducive to the cessation of *dukkha*? The Buddha was reported to have said that it is through not understanding interdependent co-arising that "this generation has become like a tangled ball of string, covered as with a blight, tangled like coarse grass, unable to pass beyond states of woe, the ill destiny, ruin and the round of birth-and-death."[11] For as long as people do not understand the ways in which persons and psycho-socio-cultural forces co-arise and inter-condition one another, they keep behaving themselves in such ways that produce and reproduce *dukkha* for others as well as for themselves. Eventually the vicious cycle of *dukkha* production is formed and people are caught up in it and unable to "pass beyond states of woe." If not understanding interdependent co-arising leads to *dukkha*, as it is presented in the quote, then the cessation of *dukkha* cannot be effected without understanding interdependent co-arising.

It has been established among both early Buddhists who compiled the *Nikāya*-s and contemporary Buddhist scholars that interdependent co-arising is the central teaching of the Buddha that can string all of his teachings together. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, Sāriputta (Sanskrit: Śāriputra), who traditionally has been recognized as the wisest and most scholarly among the Buddha's direct disciples, reported: "this has been said by the Blessed One: 'One who sees dependent origination sees the *Dhamma*; one who sees the *Dhamma* sees dependent origination.'"[12] Similarly, in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, Ānanda, reportedly the Buddha's closest disciple and his personal attendant, was amazed at the fact that the entire meaning of the Buddha's teachings could be stated by a single phrase, i.e. interdependent co-arising.[13] David J. Kalupahana, author of *Ethics in Early Buddhism* and *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*, states, "The Buddha's explanation of the nature of existence is summarized in one word, *paṭiccasamuppāda* (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*),"[14] i.e., co-arising. Thai Buddhist

[9] *Majjhima Nikāya*, i.134-135 (*Alagaddūpama Sutta*). See also Paul Williams, *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*, with Anthony Tribe (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 38-40; Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 31.

[10] *Anguttara Nikāya*, I.186–187; duplicated in III.65.

[11] *Dīgha Nikāya*, ii.55 (*Mahānidāna Sutta*).

[12] *Majjhima Nikāya*, i.190-191 (*Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta*).

[13] *Samyutta Nikāya*, II.36 (*Nidānasamyutta*).

[14] David J. Kalupahana, *A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 53. Also in David R. Loy, *The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory* (Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2003), 182.

activist-scholar Sulak Sivaraksa writes, "The concept of interdependent co-arising is the crux of Buddhist understanding.[15] Engaged Buddhist scholar Joanna Macy points out that *paṭiccasamuppāda* was what the Buddha realized under the *bodhi* tree, and that it serves not only as an explanation of human existence, but also the ground for Buddhist morality and the means for liberation.[16]

Interdependent co-arising is the core, the summary, and the logic of the Buddhist *Dhamma*. Some may think that the Four Noble Truths are the summary of the Buddha's teachings, and many Buddhist masters begin their series of *dhamma* talks with the Four Noble Truths, honoring the tradition that they were the first *Dhamma* talk given by the Buddha after his *nibbāna*. However, that first *Dhamma* talk was first directed at the five wandering ascetics with whom the Buddha had once practiced austerities and meditation. According to the early texts, all of them had attained very advanced levels of ethical discipline and mental training. The very concise first *Dhamma* talk directed at those advanced practitioners might not be suitable as the first talk to average people who have little or no background in mental training and whose level of ethical discipline is probably not comparable to that of those five ascetics. The Four Noble Truths are undeniably central in the Buddhist *Dhamma*, but the reasoning behind the Four Noble Truths, behind the arising and cessation of *dukkha*, is interdependent co-arising. In fact, "wisdom" in Buddhism is frequently defined as seeing co-arising, seeing "into the arising and passing away of phenomena, which is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete destruction of suffering."[17] In the *Samyutta Nikāya*, it is said that having "correct wisdom" means one is able to see, as it really is, "this dependent origination and these dependently arisen phenomena."[18] Likewise, being mindful in Buddhism is to be mindful of the formation or arising of phenomena in the world, including one's body, one's mind, and one's very own existence.[19]

Given that any one phenomenon depends on multiple causes and conditions to come into existence and in turn is merely one among many causes or conditions for other phenomena, the "logic" revealed by the teaching of interdependent co-arising is not linear causality, but network causality. "Buddhist causality," Nicholas F. Gier and Paul Kjellberg state, "is seen as a cosmic web of causal conditions rather than linear and mechanical notions of push-pull causation."[20] Instead of seeing one and only one cause leading to one and only one effect without being affected by the effect, interdependent co-arising points to multiple causes, multiple effects, and mutual influences among phenomena in the world. To see interdependent co-arising is to see the causes, origins, and conditions[21] of phenomena, to understand the network of origination, and to comprehend under what conditions have things and events in human life come to be what they are. Therefore, from a *Dhammic* perspective, a view that presumes only one cause for all existing problems or proposes only one measure as

[15] Sulak Sivaraksa, *Conflict, Culture, Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalized World* (Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2005), 71.

[16] Joanna Macy, *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 26-7 and 40.

[17] *Anguttara Nikāya*, IV.94; also V.2, VIII.30, VIII.49, VIII.54, and IX.3.

[18] *Samyutta Nikāya*, II.27 (*Nidānasamyutta*).

[19] *Majjhima Nikāya*, i.55–63 (*Satipatthāna Sutta*).

[20] Nicholas F. Gier and Paul Kjellberg, "Buddhism and the Freedom of the Will: Pali and Mahayanist Responses," in *Freedom and Determinism*, edited by Joseph Keim Campbell, Michael O'Rourke, and David Shier (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004), 284.

[21] In the Pāli tradition, *hetu* (cause), *samudaya* (origin), and *paccaya* (condition) have been understood as synonyms. *Dīgha Nikāya* ii.57 (*Mahānidāna Sutta*). See also Bhikkhu Bodhi, "Introduction" to the Book of Causation (*Nidānavagga*), in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2002), 516.

the solution to all problems is to be viewed with more suspicion than those that acknowledge the intricate interrelations among multiple causes and recommend multiple measures simultaneously for dealing with *dukkha*-filled and *dukkha*-inducing situations. Insofar as people interdependently co-arise with their socio-cultural contexts, any view or practice purported to be conducive to the alleviation of *dukkha* has to be practical and practicable within the given socio-cultural conditionings in order to be truly *dukkha*-alleviating.

Moreover, for any view to strike a chord with the audience, for any theory to be persuasive to the audience, for any practice to be actually practiced by the audience, it has to be relevant to the life experience of the audience. Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett, authors of *The Sociology of Early Buddhism*, observe that "the Buddha was fully aware of the brāhmanical cultural bedrock on which so many of his potential converts operated and knew that to extend his influence he would be required to present his teachings and normative forms of conduct within the traditionally patterned forms of behavior."[22] The Buddha was very skillful in making use of the beliefs and concepts permeating the Indian culture at his time in order to bring, gradually and gently, his interlocutors to understand and practice the *dukkha*-alleviating *Dhamma*, whether or not they planned to become Buddhist renunciates or identify themselves as lay followers of the Buddha.[23] For example, although taking a non-theistic viewpoint and discouraging metaphysical speculations, the Buddha frequently talked about the gods in the Hindu pantheon, as well as *kamma* and rebirth, all of which were common beliefs in his day.[24]

In addition to re-appropriating the accepted concepts in the larger socio-cultural context, the Buddha also adapted to the particular dispositions and capacities of his interlocutors. Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi note that the Buddha "explains the principles he has seen in the way most appropriate for his auditors."[25] The same point was made by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. in his introduction to *Buddhist Hermeneutics*: "The Buddha is said to have taught different things to different people based on their interests, dispositions, capacities, and levels of intelligence."[26] In dialoguing with brāhmins such as Vāsettha,[27] Sundarika Bhāradvāja,[28] Sigālaka,[29] and Kūtadanta,[30] the Buddha appealed to each person's beliefs and practices in order to bring them to practice the *dukkha*-ceasing *Dhamma*. Bhikkhu Ānanda observes that the Buddha, when addressing rural folks, used similes that were familiar to them, such as bullock cart, seed, or irrigation ditch, so that his teachings could be more easily comprehended.[31]

---

[22] Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett, *The Sociology of Early Buddhism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 241.

[23] John J. Makransky, "Buddhist Perspectives on Truth in Other Religions: Past and Present." *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 344 and 346; Loy, *The Great Awakening*, 7; Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, 29.

[24] James R. Egge, in particular, studied the way in which the Buddha ethicized the concept of *kamma* in *Religious Giving and the Invention of Karma in Theravāda Buddhism* (Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 2002), 41-67.

[25] Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi, "Introduction II," in *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Anguttara Nikāya*, selected and translated from the Pāli by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1999), 13.

[26] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Introduction," in *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 3.

[27] *Dīgha Nikāya* i.246-251 (*Tevijja Sutta*);

[28] *Majjhima Nikāya*, i.39 (*Vatthūpama Sutta*).

[29] *Dīgha Nikāya* iii.180-192 (*Sigālaka Sutta*).

[30] *Dīgha Nikāya* i.143-148 (*Kūtadanta Sutta*).

[31] Bhikkhu Ānanda, "The Buddhist Approach to the Scriptures," *Journal of Dharma* 21, no. 4 (October–December 1996): 370–1.

As a matter of fact, the *Nikāya*-s present the Buddha first and foremost as a teacher, a human being who came to understand interconditionality and sought to teach it out of compassion, not some speculator who invented doctrines or some supra-human being who imposed rules:

> Whether Tathāgata arise in the world or not, it still remains a fact, a firm and necessary condition of existence, that all formations are impermanent… that all formations are subject to suffering … that all things are non-self. A Tathāgata fully awakens to this fact and penetrates it. Having fully awakened to it and penetrated it, he announces it, teaches it, makes it known, presents it, discloses it, analyses it and explains it: that all formations are impermanent, that all formations are subject to suffering, that all things are non-self.[32]

All Buddhist traditions hold that people can understand the formations and cessations of phenomena on their own without receiving revelations of any kind from any specific deity or person, and that the Buddha was one such person who understood, practiced, and realized a way of life that will be conducive to the cessation of *dukkha*. He taught what he had discovered and realized. He taught in order to enhance the listeners' comprehension of the conditions and conditionality of existence and to motivate them to engage in conscious, self-initiated trainings and practices that would help alleviate *dukkha* for all beings in the interconnected web of life.

To highlight the Buddha's role as a teacher is to understand that the Buddha's words as recorded in the early Buddhist texts such as the *Nikāya*-s were uttered in the middle of the process of teaching and for the purpose of teaching, and so as all other scriptures in later traditions. For any teaching to be understood and practiced, it has to reflect the immediate objectives of that particular moment, to appeal to what the targeted audience take for granted, and to suit the interests, dispositions, and capacities of the learners. Inasmuch as the causes and conditions of *dukkha* are different for each culture, and in fact different for each person, teachers with the cessation of *dukkha* in mind need to find myriad different ways to teach. The teachings that could induce *dukkha*-alleviating understandings and practices in Northeastern India two thousand and five hundred years ago may or may not be able to induce *dukkha*-alleviating understandings and practices in another space-time. Therefore, it is not being true to the Buddha's own teachings to demand or impose uniformity in terms of *dukkha*-alleviating views and practices. It is an illusion to think that "if people would only behave and think correctly, we'd all practice the same religion."[33] The Buddha himself said that all he ever taught was the cessation of *dukkha* and the Buddha himself cautioned against clinging to views or group identity. For the purpose of transporting more beings, all of whom conditioned by their particular socio-cultural contexts, to the shore of the cessation of *dukkha*, Buddhists should not cling to a particular view or practice simply because it is taught in their tradition. They should certainly not cling to any traditional teaching if it is no longer practical in the particular space-time in which they find themselves. In the same spirit, they need not hesitate to employ rafts previously not found in their own tradition, if those rafts are conducive to the cessation of *dukkha* in their current contexts.

For Buddhism, the uniformity-diversity dichotomy is a false dichotomy, and so is the dichotomy of universalism and particularism. The unifying *Dhammic* perspective is interdependent co-arising, and the unifying *Dhammic* vision is the cessation of *dukkha*. Buddhism

[32] *Samyutta Nikāya* II.25; *Anguttara Nikāya*, III.134. See also Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, 29; Payutto, *Buddhadhamma*, 77.

[33] Rita M. Gross, "Buddhist History for Buddhist Practitioners," *Tricycle*, Fall 2010: 118.

is quite universalistic in its analysis of all phenomena in the world in terms of interdependent co-arising, and it is universalistic in its goal of liberating all sentient beings from *duhkha*. And yet the "logic" of interdependent co-arising and the goal of cessation of *dukkha* allow and, in fact, require much diversity in teachings and practices. The co-arising of and around a person is different from that of and around another person, and so the *duhkha* in a person's life is different from that in another person's life. Likewise, the co-arising of each culture is different, and so the *duhkha* pervasive in each culture is different. As such, the cessation of *duhkha* requires attention to particularity and involves a huge variety of views and practices suitable for the person and the culture. Buddhism never falls into complete relativism, though. The cessation of *dukkha* remains the unwavering goal of Buddhism, and therefore a practice that is not conducive to the cessation, or at least alleviation, of *dukkha* is not worth holding onto, even though it might have been the norm in one's tradition for a long time. And interdependent co-arising remains the rationale of all Buddhist teachings, and therefore a view that is not reasonable in light of interdependent co-arising is not a *Dhammic* view.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Dialogues of the Buddha, Vols. 2 and 3, translated from the Pāli of the *Dīgha Nikāya* by Thomas William Rhys Davids and Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids. London: Pāli Text Society, 1956-1966.

Further Dialogues of the Buddha, translated from the Pāli of the *Majjhima Nikāya* by Lord Chalmers. London: Pāli Text Society, 1956-1966.

Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Anguttara Nikāya, selected and translated from the Pāli by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1999.

The Anguttara Nikāya of the Sutta Pitaka, Eka Duka, and Tika Nipāta, translated from the Pāli by Edmund Rowland Jayetilleke Gooneratne. London: Pāli Text Society, 1885.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2002.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya, translated from the Pāli by Maurice Walshe. Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya, 2nd edition, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2001.

Secondary Sources

Ambedkar, Bhimrao Ramji. *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, 3rd edition. Bombay, India: Siddharth Publications, 1984.

Bailey, Greg, and Ian Mabbett. *The Sociology of Early Buddhism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006

Bhikkhu Ānanda. "The Buddhist Approach to the Scriptures." *Journal of Dharma 21.4* (October-December 1996): 364-377.

Bhikkhu Bodhi. "Introduction" to the Book of Causation (*Nidānavagga*). In *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, 515-32. Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2002.

Bhikkhu Chao Chu. "Buddhism and Dialogue Among the World Religions: Meeting the Challenge of Materialistic Skepticism." In *Ethics, Religion, and the Good Society: New Directions in a Pluralistic World*, edited by Joseph Runzo, 167-71. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

Egge, James R. *Religious Giving and the Invention of Karma in Theravāda Buddhism*. Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 2002.

Gier, Nicholas F., and Paul Kjellberg. "Buddhism and the Freedom of the Will: Pali and Mahayanist Responses." In *Freedom and Determinism*, edited by Joseph Keim Campbell, Michael O'Rourke, and David Shier, 277-304. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004.

Gross, Rita M. "Buddhist History for Buddhist Practitioners." *Tricycle*, Fall 2010: 82-85 and 118-20.

Gross, Rita M. *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Kalupahana, David J. *A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992.

Keown, Damien, comp. *A Dictionary of Buddhism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

King, Sallie B. *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr., ed. "Introduction." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr.. *Modern Buddhism: Readings for the Unenlightened*. London: Penguin Books, 2002.

Loy, David R. *The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory*. Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2003.

Macy, Joanna. *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991.

Makransky, John J. "Buddhist Perspectives on Truth in Other Religions: Past and Present." *Theological Studies 64* (2003): 334-361.

Nyanaponika Thera, and Bhikkhu Bodhi. "Introduction II." In *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Anguttara Nikāya*, selected and translated from the Pāli by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 11-30. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1999.

Pacey, Scott. "A Buddhism for the Human World: Interpretations of *Renjian Fojiao* in Contemporary Taiwan." *Asian Studies Review* 29 (March 2005): 61-77.

Phra Prayudh Payutto (Phra Rājavaramuni). *Buddhadhamma: Natural Laws and Values for Life*, translated by Grant A. Olson. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Santikaro Bhikkhu. "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Life and Society through the Natural Eyes of Voidness." *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, edited by Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, 147-94. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Sivaraksa, Sulak. *Conflict, Culture, Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalized World.* Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2005.

Williams, Paul. *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*, with Anthony Tribe. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Aśvaghoṣa and Nirvāṇa

Prof. Mrs. K. Sankarnarayan &
Dr. Mrs. Parineeta Deshpande
K.J. Somaiya Center for Buddhist Studies,
Mumbai, India

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to study the notion of *nirvana* and the path leading to it, as depicted in *Saundarānanda*,[1] an eighteen canto epic by the great Buddhist Sanskrit poet Aśvaghoṣa (1st century A.D.)[2], which is available only in Sanskrit. This particular work is vivid and elaborate in its philosophical treatment because it has a large scope of six cantos for that purpose. The poem depicts Nanda's (the Buddha's half-brother) conversion to Buddhism and his journey from passion to salvation which was a real challenge to the Lord Buddha. While depicting Nanda's attainment of Enlightenment, the poet has emphasized more on the applied aspect and has given a complete and coherent picture of the Buddhist faith during his age which marks the period of transition in the development of Buddhist thought.

Which School does Aśvaghoṣa Follow?

Aśvaghoṣa was a follower of Theravāda, certainly.[3] However, Hirakawa opines that Aśvaghoṣa shows close connections with the Sarvāstivāda school[4], but he has also been connected with the Bahuśrutīya, Sautrāntika and Yogācāra traditions[5], and thus cannot be said to belong to any single school. Further Hirakawa[6] comments that his *Buddhacarita* also does not have any clear doctrinal affiliation. However, in *Saundarānanda* the treatment of the theme indicates the poet's tendencies to unify the Buddhist philosophical trends prevailing at that particular epoch.

In *Buddhacarita*[7], Siddhartha has advised: "to pursue only the northern direction for the sake of the highest Dharma" and told, "it would not be fitting for the wise to move even a single step towards the south". The reference also serves to record the emerging trends in the field of Buddhist thought based on regional affiliation and influences. So, which school of philosophy flourished in the north when Aśvaghoṣa wrote? Sarvāstivāda, an offshoot of early Theravāda, mostly flourished in the north. It is said that in order to maintain its view, in struggle with other rival schools, the early

---

1 Johnston, E.H. *The Saundarānanda of Aśvaghoṣa*, Delhi : Motilal Banarasidass, rpt.1975

2 Vide Johnston, E.H. *The Buddhacarita or Acts of The Buddha*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1992, Intro. pp. xiii ff

3 Johnston, E.H. Introduction to *Buddhacarita,* ii. p. xxiv

4 Dutta, N. *Buddhist Sects in India* Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1978,p 134. Chinese tradition also associates him with this school, vide for this, Watters, T. *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India (A.D. 629-645*) vol. II, p. 270-71.

5 Vide Johnston, E.H. *The Buddhacarita or Acts of The Buddha*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1992, Intro. pp. xxiv ff: The author opines that the poet belonged to the Bahuśrutīya or an adherent of the school from which Bahuśrutīya issued.

6 Hirakawa, Akira. *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Sakyamuni to Early Mahayana*, (tr. & ed.) Paul Groner, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1998. p. 263

7 *Buddhacarita*, VII.41

Sarvāstivādins retired first to Mathurā and then to Kashmir which became the principle seat of the school. Here its doctrine was taught in purity and becoming popular developed the literary tradition.[8]

It is to be noted that Kanishka's support for the Sarvāstivādin school is clearly manifested in the inscription found in the great *stūpa* of Kanishka[9]. According to B. C. Law, Aśvaghoṣa's *kāvyas* are influenced by the traditions of the Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda and Mahāsañghika.[10] "But the only trace of Sarvāstivāda tenet is found in the quotation of the rule governing the use of '*asti*' as particle[11] which may be allusion to the famous controversy about the reality of the past and future: it does not, however, illuminate his position in the matter. On the other hand, in two points he seems to reject the standard doctrine of the school.[12] This idea is based on the canonical authority.[13] But this was strenuously denied by Sarvāstivādin and as strenuously upheld by Sautrāntikas[14], to which school no one would suggest that Aśvaghoṣa belonged."

There are inscriptional evidences pointed out by Hirakawa[15] found around Mathurā, "indicate that a number of schools of Nikāya Buddhism had monasteries there, including Mahāsaṃghika (mentioned in six inscriptions), Sarvāstivāda (two inscriptions) Sammatīya (one inscription), and Dharmaguptaka (one inscription)." Hypothetically based on this, one can ascertain the unifying factor of different schools of Buddhist Philosophical terms being applied by Aśvaghoṣa in his *kāvya* are used to propagate the teachings of the Buddha.

Another interesting thing to be noted that the twelfth canto of *Saundarānanda* contains a remarkable eulogy of *śraddhā* for which the only complete parallel is in early Mahāyāna Sütra; faith is not merely desire for the Buddha's dharma[16] but personal devotion to Buddha[17], and which accounts for the breathing of *bhakti* religions for Buddhism reached their apogee in the Mahāyāna.

It should be noted that though the Mahāyāna teachings had been spreading for at least one or two centuries before his times[18], the first notable expression of is found in his poem, in spite of the fact that he shows close affinity to the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda, the most widely spread group of schools in India during his time.[19] While regarding his philosophical views, it may be noted that they stand midway between Theravāda with more inclination towards Sarvāstivāda and Mahāyāna.[20] "Evidently however for a man who is *parapratyaya śraddhā*, faith is an absolute prerequisite to salvation."[21] In the light of the present paper, an attempt is made here to trace the emerging trends in the Buddhist thought and their unification as found in the *Kāvya* of Aśvaghoṣa as far as the notion of *nirvāṇa* is concerned.

---

8 *Op. cit* p.126ff.

9 Hjirakawa, *op. cit*. pp.234 -235

10 Law, B.C. *Aśvaghoṣa*, Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal,1946, p.55

11 *Buddhacarita* ed. E.H. Johnston, Introduction, p. xxv, *Saundarānanda* xii.10

12 Ibid. *Saundarānanda* xvii.18ab- *yasmāt abhütvā bhavatīha sarvam, bhütvā ca bhüyo na bhavaty avasyam/*

13 Ibid. *Majjhimanikāya*. III.25

14 *Abhidharmakośa,* I 228-9

15 Hirakawa, Akira, *op. cit*. p.235

16 *Saundarānanda, op.cit*.xii.16; *dharmacchanda,* 31;" *tvaddharme parame rame…"*

17 Ibid. *Saundarānanda,* xvii, 34, 63-73; xviii. 41, 48, 50-51; *Buddhacarita,* Canto xxvii;

18 Dutt, N. *Maháyána Buddhism*. Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashana, 2003, Ch. I.

19 Dutt, N. *Buddhist Sects in India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass,1978, Ch. VII

20 E.H. Johnston, *op. cit*, p. xxvi

21 Ibid. p. xxxiv

Range of the term

Aśvaghoṣa's description of *nirvāṇa* of which the essence is tranquility (*śānti*)[22] based upon the *nikāyas*. He has emphasized more on the practical aspect of it than on the speculative one, probably because he wanted to reach out to the worldly-minded and the non-believers (*anya - manas*) of this faith[23], by expounding the truth disguised as *kāvya*. According to Aśvaghoṣa, *nirvāṇa* is a psycho-ethical term, which Nanda reached in this birth by ethical practices (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*) and insight (*prajñā*). Throughout *Saundarānanda, nirvāṇa* is described as the destruction of attachment (*rāga*)[24],hatred (*dveṣa)*, and delusion (*moha*), of desire (*tøṣṇā*), impressions (*saṅskāra*), and firm grasp of wrong views (*upādāna)*, of afflictions (*samkleśas*), and of desire for existence (*bhava*), birth (*jāti*), old age, death (*jarāmaraṇa)*, and thus of misery (*dukkha*).[25] In describing the positive aspect of *nirvāṇa*, the poet states that it is a condition which is very happy (*mahatsukham*)[26], imperishable (*acyuta*)[27], tranquil (*śānta*)[28]. The ethical conception of *nirvāṇa* appealed to Aśvaghoṣa so much that he gives its characteristic features by using a few synonyms and many poetical words, emphasizing one or the other phase of this many sided conception such as: *nirodha*[29] (cessation of passions), *nirvøti*[30] (Páli: *nibbuti* - cooling, allayment, peace and happiness), *vimukti*[31](deliverance, emancipation), *vimokṣa*[32] (dissociation from the worldly things, arhatship), *nirmokṣa*[33](complete liberation, release from recurring births), *praśama*[34](calm), *śānta*[35] (peaceful), *kṣema* (safe), *naiṣṭhika* (final), *sanātana* (eternal)[36], *śiva*[37] (holy), *tøṣṇā-virāga* (detachment from craving), *amøtapada* [38] (the state of immortality) *paramaśānti*[39] (highest peace). The exegesis of all these terms can be reconciled as *nirvāṇa* in the early Theravāda tradition.

---

[22] Cf. *Saṁyuttanikáya* (tr) Rhys Davids C.A.F. and F.L. Woodward, 5 vols. Pali Text Society, London, 1994, I.136*;Majjhimanikáya* (tr.)Horner,I.B.,3vols., Pali Text Society, London, 1997-2000, I.436*; Suttanipáta* (ed). Bapat, P. V., Delhi: Sai Satguru Pub.,1990, *v.*933

[23] *Saundaránanda* XVIII. 63.

[24] Cf. *Saṁyuttanikáya* IV.251;also *Suttanipáta* v. 1086; *Saundaránanda* XVII.65

[25] Cf. *Saṁyuttanikáya* .II. 117; *Suttanipáta* v.*467; Saundaránanda* XVI.27

[26] Ibid XVI.65

[27] Ibid XVI.27

[28] Cf. *Dhammapada* (ed.&tr.) Radhakrishnan, S., Delhi: Oxford Press, 1977, vs.202, 203; *Saundarānanda* XVII.72; XVIII. 32,56

[29] Cf. *Saṁyuttanikáya* II.117; *Saundaránanda* XVI.26

[30] The *theras* and the *theris* are often found exclaiming, "*sītibhuto'mhi nibbuto*". *Theragáthá* vs.79,298,702; *Therīgáthá* vs. 15,16; *Suttanipáta* vs.1091-94; *Saundaránanda* XVI.29

[31] Cf. *Saṁyuttanikáya* II.124;Ibid XVII.67; *Buddhacarita* XIV.97.

[32] *Saundarānanda* XVII.12

[33] Ibid V.15;VIII.62; XIII.16,22

[34] Ibid XVI.4c

[35] Ibid XVI.27

[36] Cf *Itivuttaka* (tr) Woodward, F.L., Pali Text Society, London, 2003,27; also *Suttanipáta* v. 453; *Saundarānanda* XVI.27

[37] *Saundarānanda op.cit*.V.46.

[38] Ibid XIII.10;XIV. 42-44

[39] Ibid XVII.70

Nirvāṇa (*Nirvøti*) as Extinction of fire and state of Bliss

The term *nirvāṇa* has been derived variously by the etymologists[40] and our object is to see how Aśvaghoṣa uses it. It is very interesting to note that the poet uses the term *nirvøti*[41] in the sense of 'emancipation/ extinction' instead of *nirvāṇa,* however both mean the same. It is clear enough that he derives the term from the root: *nir* + *vø*, meaning the extinguishing of fire which indicates the then prevailing Buddhist conception of the term. The Pali grammarians exposit the word *nibbāna* as composed of *nir-vā-ṇa*. The prefix *nir* stands out for 'out', while the root '*vā*' stands for 'to blow' or 'to go out'. And the last '*ṇa*' is the suffix which renders a meaning analogous to 'becoming extinct'. The 'blowing out' or extinction is contextually referred to as extinction of craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*). The Buddha's foremost disciple Sariputta confirms plainly the attainment of this nibbanic state in this way: "*Nibbāna, nibbāna* they say. But, what, friend, is this *nibbāna*? Extinction of desires, extinction of hatred, extinction of delusion – that, friend, is called *nibbāna*".[42]

Nirvāṇa as extinction of fire is explained and repeated in Pali canonical literature by using the simile of a flame[43]. In *Ratana Sutta* it has been said, "The wise who have destroyed their seeds of existence and whose desires do not increase, go out like a lamp", "*nibbanti dhīrā yathāyam padīpo.*"[44]

Aśvaghoṣa has also applied the simile of flame of a lamp to explain *nirvøti* (salvation), "Just as a lamp extinguishes forever at the exhaustion of the oil and does not go back to earth, sky or any other quarter, so does a saint, who has reached *nirvøti* does not depart to any of the quarters but attains peace."[45]

The simile of extinction of flame may indicate the passing from a visible state into a state that cannot be defined. Yet it exists. The going out of fire is not by blowing into it, but due to depriving it of further fuel. The consuming fire of passion, of craving which results in round of birth (*samsāra*) has to be extinguished. Nanda realized *nirvøti* (salvation) from within by destroying passion for woman. That is why in the text it is compared to the fire going out, rather than to fire being put out. The result of quenching fire is coolness which is expressed in the words of Nanda thus: "*śitám hødam ivāvatīrṇah*."[46] (As if I have descended into the pond of coolness.) His attitudinal behavior pattern brought about by craving and clinging ceased. While describing Nanda after the attainment of *nirvāṇa,* Aśvaghoṣa says that he was now free from all desires, all expectations; he was no more troubled by hope, fear, grief, conceit or passion. Outwardly the same, though he was a thoroughly changed person from within. [47]

---

[40] Vide Rhys Davids T.W. and William Stede. *Pali-English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1993, p.362ff...

[41] M. Monier – Williams, *Sanskrit –English Dictionary*, p.558

[42] *Saṁyuttanikáya* IV.251refers to dying out, meaning 'dying out in the heart ,the fires of the three cardinal sins: sensuality, ill-will and stupidity (*rága, dosa, moha*). Here it is clearly pointed out that nibbana is *rágakkhaya*, *dosakkhaya* and *mohakkhaya*.

[43] *Majjhimanikáya* I, Pali Text Society, 1997-2000, p.487; *Suttanipāta*, (ed). Bapat, P.V., Delhi: Sri Satguru Pub., 1990, v.1061

[44] *Suttanipáta*, v.235

[45] *Saundarānanda* XVI.28.

[46] Ibid XVII.66.This is exactly based on *Suttanipáta* v.467 where the same simile occurs.

[47] Ibid XII. 61.

Nirvāṇa as the cessation of Birth and death cycle

The Buddha tells Nanda, "This is the stage in which there is neither birth, old age, death, disease, nor contact with what is disagreeable, neither failure of wishes nor separation from the agreeable, which is peaceful, final and imperishable."[48] Such stage can be reached only with a mind in equipoise. This is based on the canonical authority[49] where it has been said that the end of birth and death is *nibbāna.* That is, when craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) are made to extinct or 'blown out', the desire to re-arise is made to extinct or blown out as well, amounting to destruction of rebirth. The *Suttanipāta*[50] notes this point in this way: 'the end of old age and death. (*jarāmaccuparikkhayam*); further the point is strengthened thus: "I call it 'quenching', the complete destruction of old age and death". It has been advised in *Buddhacarita* [51] that annihilation of birth destroys old age and death and annihilation of birth can be attained by destroying the desire to be born (*bhava-taṇhā*) Thus, the chain of suffering as observed by the poet is as follows: Suffering in life is due to birth which is due to our desire to be born, which is due to our clinging to passion hence the mendicant's first aim should be destruction of the passion by destruction of latent tendencies.[52]

Aśvaghoṣa has dedicated the entire canto-XVI of *Saundarānanda* for the exposition the Four Noble Truths and hence named as '*ārya-satya-vyākhyāna'* which is a poetical expression and expansion of the original *Dhamma-cakka-pavattana Sutta.*[53] Referring to them he says, "This is suffering which is constant and akin to trouble; This is the cause of suffering, akin to starting it; this is cessation of suffering, akin to walking away. And this, akin to a refuge, is a peaceable path".[54] This is the traditional fourfold exposition by the poet, that hardly advances in thought beyond the canonical texts of early Buddhism.

Synthesis of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma Terms

It is clear from the above discussion that Aśvaghoṣa s presentation of *nirvāṇa* is in complete agreement with the trend of the Buddha's teaching as in the earlier sources which aims at the attainment of arhatship as the final goal of religious effort. Though Aśvaghoṣa does not show his adherence to any particular school of Buddhism explicitly, the Sarvāstivādin terms occur in his *kāvya* to a considerable measure. Though we have no right to expect in the poet an account of the philosophical subtleties distinguishing one sect from the other, it will be shown here that there is in his *kāvyas* a historical synthesis of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma terms which are found fully developed in the later Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature.[55]

Aśvaghoṣa's period is noted for transition of Theravāda school into that of Mahāyāna on the one hand and on the other hand, Sarvāstivāda was steadily on the increase in the north. When the poet flourished, it seems that, the Sarvāstivāda speculations were gradually developing and

48 *Saundarānanda* XVI.27
49 *Samyuttanikāya* II.117
50 *Suttanipāta*, v.1094
51 *Buddhacarita*, XIV. 80
52 *Saundarānanda* XVI.24
53 *Mahāvagga,* Sacred books of East (XII), 1974, I.6.17.
54 *Saundarānanda*, XVI.4
55 Dutt, N. *Buddhist Sects in India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass,1978,p.142ff

becoming popular as compared to all other sects.[56] We also know that besides the Theravāda, among the traditional schools of early Buddhism, Sarvāstivāda is the only school which has an *Abhidharmapīṭaka* consisting of seven treatises. Its doctrinal viewpoints must have been taking shape at the time of Aśvaghoṣa. Though Vasubandhu quotes the view of knotty dogmatic point in the *bhāṣya* on *kārikā*[57] neither he or Yaśomitra the commentator, gives the author's name.[58] Certainly "if Aśvaghoṣa had been a leading light of the Sarvāstivādin, they would have hastened to claim the support of his authority."[59]

Dr. N. Dutta refers to "an inscription on the Asoka pillar at Sarnath, mentioning the name of Aśvaghoṣa, was probably dedicated to Sarvāstivādins, which appellation was unfortunately obliterated."[60] Though the poet does not refer to any of the metaphysical speculation of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, the terms used by the poet such as *skandas*, *hetu-parikṣaya, anuśaya, pratisamkhyā- nirodha*, *vimuktimārga, ātmāśraya and bāhyāśraya*, *śraddhā-adhivimukta* and the predominance of *prajñā* smack of Sarvāstivādin ideas[61] none the less. These Sarvāstivādin terms which are mentioned, without mentioning the name of the school may indicate that probably during his period the special principles of Sarvāstivāda were existing and could have been popular as Buddhist philosophical terms.

The poet accepts the early Buddhist conception of the individual as consisting of the five *skandas*, yet, describes them as, "as one sees fire to be hot in the present, so it has been hot in the past and will be so in future; similarly as one sees *skandas* to be suffering in the present, so they have been suffering in the past and will be in future." This description makes his Sarvāstivāda doctrinal position very clear. The Sarvāstivādins maintain the existence of the *skandas* in their abstract forms at all times, whether in the past, present or future. Their contention is that the things constituted out of the *skandas* at a particular time are subject to disintegration but not the *skandas* themselves, which always exist in their abstract state.[62]

Nanda realized the body to be impermanent (*anitya*), empty (*śünya)*, devoid of individuality (*nirātmaka*) and liable to suffering (*dukkha*)[63] the fundamental creed of Buddhism, acceptable to Sarvāstivādins. The poet also gives the exegesis of these terms. Dr B.C. Law brings to our attention that the theory of *śünya* was evolved in the minds of the teachers long before its development in the later period by Nagārjuna.[64] It stands to reason that philosophical ideas and doctrines do not spring up unexpectedly, but grow out of old ideas which can be traced.

In *Saundarānanda* (XVI.25, 26) the Buddha tells Nanda, "Eradicate desires if you would wish to be free from suffering, for an effect is abolished by abolishing the cause. The abolition of sufferings precedes from exhaustion of the cause *(hetu-parikṣaya*). Therefore witness yourself, the holy, peaceful element, the refuge which is free from the passion of desire, the salvation (*nirodha)* which is eternal, unassailable and holy."

---

56 Dutt, N., *Op .cit*, p.129ff

57 *Abhidharmakośabhāsya*, iv.86

58 E.H. Johnston, op. cit., Introduction, p. xxvi

59 Ibid. p. xxvi

60 N. Dutta*, op. cit.*, p 134

61 Vide, for details, Dhammajoti, K.L. *Sarvástiváda Abhidharma*, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 2009.

62 Dutt, N., *Op. cit.* p149ff.

63 Ibid.XVII.17-20,

64 Vide his book *Asvaghosa,* p.55

This *hetu* is primarily made up of *rāga, dosa* and *moha* and according to their proportion, an individual acts which determine his rebirth. In the *nikāyas* these three are called the *akusalamülāni*[65], the roots of evil and the practitioner is released from rebirth by their disappearance. Aśvaghoṣa, instead of using the term "roots", prefers to use the Abhidharmic term *hetu-parikṣaya*. The doctrine of causality is of central importance for Sarvāstivāda . Aśvaghoṣa uses the term *Nirodha* as a synonym of *Nirvana* [66] (which also means the exhaustion of cause (*hetuparikṣaya – paticca-samuppāda* - series consisting of twelve linked formulae - *dvādasanidāna* in the order of both *anuloma* and *pratiloma*). Actually the core Buddhist philosophy of *paticca-samuppāda* refers to series of cause and effect as dependent origination for which the Savāstivāda metaphysicians made a distinction between '*hetu*' and *paccaya* and not in the sense of *kāraṇa-kārya.*[67]

Though the term *nirodha* is enumerated as the second Noble Truth in the early Theravāda tradition, Aśvaghoṣa uses the term *pratisaṃkhyāna*[68], which corresponds again to the *darśanamārga* of Abhidharma. In Sarvāstivāda, the better known term *nirvāṇa* is synonymous with *pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* cessation through deliberation or discriminative effort.).[69]

The beginning of the *Bīja* Theory

Aśvaghoṣa often quotes the example of seed-sprout relationship to explain his viewpoint. This allusion may be taken as an elementary or less developed form of *bīja* theory which was developed further in the Sarvāstivāda tradition.[70] The Buddha repeatedly tells Nanda that passions or desires in many forms are the seeds of re-birth. In the Tibetan version of *Buddhacarita,* it is said that "Just as the shoot is produced from the seed, and yet the shoot is not to be identified with the seed, nor can either of them exist without the other, on such wise is the body and the interaction of the senses and the consciousness."[71] The poet here indicates that just as spout and seed are neither identical nor different, likewise is the relation of passions and the birth of a sentient being.

In most human beings there remains a latent tendency towards passions (*anuśaya*) like fire covered by ashes. Hence Nanda is advised to appease it through cultivation, like fire through water. For those desires proceed again from that *anuśaya* like the sprouts from the seed. On account of its destruction, those desires would exist no more like in absence of seed the sprout will not exist.[72]

Aśvaghoṣa's term *nirmokṣa* used as synonym of *nirvāṇa*, expounds the need of purity of mind. Nanda's mind was susceptible only to external conditions. Finding the seed of complete deliverance (*nirmokṣa*) in Nanda, but knowledge (*jñāna*) weak in him, the Buddha tries to awaken him[73] He explains, "As defilements (*samkleśa*s) are of two types, the means of purification is also of two types:

[65] *Majjhima nikáya* III.220
[66] *Saundarānanda* xvi .26
[67] David J. Kalupahana, A Source Book of Early Buddhist Philosophy, p.4
[68] Ibid XV.4a,
[69] Shastri , Swami Dwarikadasa, (ed) *Abhidharma-kosa-bhásya of Ácarya Vasubandhu,* Varanasi: Baudha Bharati Series, 1998,I.6
[70] Vide, for details, Dhammajoti, K. L. *Abhidharma Doctrines and Controversies on Perception*, HKU: CBS Publication Series, Hong Kong, 2007, pp.15-18, 21, 26,77-99.
[71] Johnston, E. H. *The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1992, part III p23.
[72] *Saundarānanda* XV.5-6.
[73] Ibid.V.15.

- *Ātmāśraya:* in which internal impulse is strong and self-dependent. Salvation can be attained immediately on receiving stimulation (*ghaṭṭitamātra eva)*.
- *bāhyāśraya* or *parāśraya*: external condition is that in which understanding of external conditions is strong. In this, salvation is attained with difficulty and only by dependence on another.[74]

Thus the poet records the two categories of religious aspirants*; ātmāśraya* are those who attain salvation of themselves by virtue (*hetu*) of the working within them and *parāṭraya* are those who can act in reliance on others. The Buddha falls in the first category, Nanda in the second. For a person like Nanda who is *pratyaya-neya-cetā* [75] a firm hold on faith is an absolute pre-requisite to salvation. Speaking of the faith in Dharma and its results the Buddha says, "The faith of one whose doctrinal sight is dim and resolution is weak, is unreliable or it does not work to the desired end. Faith becomes firm with the realization of real truth and the restrain of the senses gives the sight of truth. The tree of faith of such a man becomes the vehicle of further advance. [76]"

That is why before Nanda treads on that path, he is advised by the Buddha to foster faith (*śraddhā*) in the Supreme Law first,[77] for "the Law grows with faith as a tree grows with its roots."[78] Faith is the hand "which grasps holy Law, as a hand takes the gift." *Śraddhā* is most important faculty as it gives steadfastness which gives strength. It is the chief agent in production of the Law.[79] Aśvaghoṣa's *śraddhā* is the first of the five *balas* of Buddhism[80] which represent the natural order in the attainment of arhatship. Thus, it is quite clear that *śraddhā* appears to be not simply believing on authority, but has reference also to heartfelt enthusiasm for a cause. By recording the two types of arhats, the poet rejects the view that all arhats fall in the second category and that all arhats are considered to be imperfect and fallible as held by the Mahāsaṃghikas[81] and suggests his close connections with the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma system which differentiate between *śraddhā-adhivimukta* and *Døṣṭi-prāpta*. [82] The closing verses of 16th canto[83] are devoted to *vīrya*, (striving) stressing on its necessity in attainment of arhatship, indicating that faith must be followed by striving. In the next canto[84] it is narrated that Nanda achieved arhatship by means of both, the Buddha's instruction and his own valor (*svena ca vikrameṇa*) The importance of *śraddhā*s and *vīrya*, two vital points of Buddhist doctrine are stressed by Aśvaghoṣa in the process of Nanda's metamorphosis, from a love-lorn husband to an enlightened sage.

Nanda is *śraddhānusāri*, the one whose practice is based on faith. From the time the practitioner becomes a stream-entrant until he becomes an *arhat*, he is called a *śraddhā-adhivimukta.* Thus the poet's notion of nirvāṇa is influenced by the tradition of the early Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda.

---

[74] Ibid 16,17

[75] Ibid 18a

[76] Ibid XVII.42,43

[77] *Saundarānanda* XII.31,36.

[78] Ibid XII.41. Cf. *Saṁyuttanikáya* I.172, where *sraddhá* is likened to a seed.

[79] Ibid XII.40; vs.33-43 contains eulogy of *sraddhá*.

[80] The usual list of the *Bala*s is *saddhá, viriya, sati, samádhi* and *paññá*. *Saṁyuttanikáya* V.202-3; V.223-24

[81] Warder, A.K., *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass,2000, p.277

[82] Paussin (ed& tr). *Abhidharmakosabhasya* of Vasubandhu, 4 vols, English tr. Leo M. Pruden, Berkeley: Asian Humanity Press, 1988, Vol. III, p.953, 955.

[83] *Saundarananda*. 92-98

[84] Ibid.XVII.62

The Path of *nirváṇa*: psychical aspect

When the Buddha found Nanda thoroughly fortified by faith, he asked him to train his body by the discipline of *sila* and next his mind by (*smøti)* [85]constant awareness of the process of his thoughts.[86] Then he has been advised to give himself to *yoga*, after selecting the subjects which help in overcoming the roots of evil [87]

Then Nanda is told to concentrate his mind for concentration of mind repels the vices.[88] Supreme Truth comes only to the stable mind and intuitive wisdom (*prajñā*) completely cuts away faults. Thus, Aśvaghoṣa attaches more importance to *prajñā*, when he says, "The intuitive wisdom completely cuts away the faults like a river in the rainy season destroys the trees on its bank and they (faults) cease to grow like trees burnt by the fire of the thunderbolt which strikes them.[89] This development of importance of *prajñā* is indicative of the emergence of the Sarvāstivāda speculative aspect during the period of the poet.

Aśvaghoṣa has dealt with the psychical aspect of *nirvāṇa* by emphasizing on yoga (contemplation). He compares the mind of a yogi who aspires to salvation (*vimokṣa*), to a strong city wherein, "the ways of knowledge, his administration of justice, the virtues his allies, the vices his enemies and salvation the land for whose conquest he strives".[90]

In 17th canto we are told that coaxed by the Buddha's exhortation, Nanda entered the path of salvation and began to practice *yoga* in the forest. Despite the zeal of his mind and his increased volition, Nanda had to fight with passionate feelings and other evil thoughts which disturbed his mind.

The four trances and the fruit (the stages of spiritual progress)

Then by shaking off entirely the theory of existence of the self, by becoming free from the doubt of the four truths and by taking the true view of the discipline to be followed, he reached the first fruit of law.[91] Nanda reaching the first stage of the fruit of law, rid himself of hesitation in practice of Law and by disconnection from section of the vices, he suppressed *kāma* which gave him extreme joy.[92]

The suppression of vices made him fearless of death or the realm of misery.[93] Then, in due course, he produced the Second Fruit[94] in which initial and sustained reflections are absent, which is calm, free from the intentness of mind, is born of concentration, and had ecstasy, bliss and inward happiness. With firmness and patience Nanda struck down hatred, wrath and malevolence and cut

---

85 *Saundarānanda* XIV.38-45;
86 The necessity of constant mindfulness is expressly mentioned in the *nikáyas*. *Añguttara nikáya* V.30; *Saṁyutta nikáya* I.33, 44.;V.218; It is mentioned in close connection with *Samádhi,* and reached its perfection in the fourth *jhána*, *smøti* and *samádhi* are included in the Noble Eightfold path.
87 Ibid.XVI.52.
88 Ibid.XIII.35.
89 Ibid XVI.36
90 Ibid XVII.12
91 Ibid.XVII.27
92 Ibid XVII.28-30
93 Ibid 35
94 Ibid 37

down the roots of evil (*lobha, dveṣa* and *moha*). Thus having overcome these foes, he reached by *yoga*, the fruit of not being subject to rebirth and reached the door of *nirvāṇa.*[95]

Then he undertook the four meditation process, abandoning each level of meditation for a progressively higher one, as he found subtle faults in it.[96] *Dhyāna* serves a cathartic function of rendering the mind pure and receptive which is covered over with impurities and is unsteady. The object of *dhyānas* is to bring the mind into such a state that it will be above worldly pleasures and pain. It can be effected by dissociating the mind completely from all worldly matters which is achieved by means of trances. While in the third trance, Nanda realized that the highest stage is tranquil and not subject to alteration.[97](For, where there is alteration, there is suffering.) Then abandoning all alterations of mind, he entered the fourth trance and set his mind on attaining arhatship.[98] A suspension of 'thought' as of 'feeling', the essence *dhyāna*, culminated into intuitive knowledge (*prajñā)*. He, then, cut off the last five fetters (*saṃyojanāni*) [99] with the sword of insight (*prajñā*) which he had cultivated and, thereby attained arhatship[100]

Shift in paradigm: Blending of Mahāyāna

By depicting Nanda's spiritual journey as stemming from his own inner psychological motivation and striving, the psychic aspect of *nirvaṇa* is emphasized by the poet which is in complete agreement with the trend of the early tradition. As soon as Nanda attained arhatship, the Buddha orders him to take up the life of a wanderer and emancipate others (XVIII.23) The idea of saving others and not being contented with one's own emancipation, is the crux of the Mahayana concept of Bodhisattvahood and though the poet relies on the older concept, he concludes with a Mahāyānic note. At the end, there is a shift in the religious paradigm, arhathood being replaced by Bodhisattvahood. The Lokottara element is also explicitly seen when the Buddha is said to have flown in the air to convert the people of Kapilavastu; and divided himself into many forms and became one again (*Saundarānanda* III.21-23).

Conclusion

Aśvaghoṣa not only retains the conception of *nirvāṇa* as found in the early Theravāda tradition but also makes it explicit by coherent interpretation of it which is implicit in the *nikāyas* " which are a mosaic made up of materials of various times and places."[101] His approach to *nirvāṇa* and to the path leading to it, is endowed with the psyco-ethical connotation, in consistency with the *nikāya* line of development. He advocated the doctrine and method of salvation in simple terms

[95] Ibid 41
[96] Ibid.XVII.42-56
[97] Ibid. 52.
[98] Ibid.56
[99] Rhys Davids T.W. and William Stede. *Pali-English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1993, p.656.*Daśa saṁyojanáni* or ten fetters or evil states of mind are *sakkáya dīṭṭḥi* (the delusion of self*), vicikicchá* (doubt), *silabbata parámása* (dependence on works), *káma* (sensuality), *vyápáda* (hatred, ill-feeling), *rüparága* (desire for life on earth), *arüparága* (love for life in heaven), *mano* (pride), *uddhacca* (excitement), *avijjá* (ignorance).Vide
[100] *Saundarānanda*. XVII.60-61
[101] Dutt, N. *Maháyána Buddhism*. Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashana, 2003, p.192

disguised as *kāvya* for the purpose of capturing the worldly-minded in which he has succeeded immensely. His Buddha worship breaths the spirit of Mahāyāna and tries to unify it with the early Theravāda tradition. He has also woven a many terms developing in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tradition. A careful study of one of the two *kāvyas Saundarānanda* of Aśvaghoṣa shows that he brilliantly expounded the Buddha's doctrine and the method of salvation, for which he uses an apt pre-established term *upaniṣad*, (*mokṣasya jñānasya sukhasya upaniṣad*)[102] suggesting by that the implicit becoming explicit. This happy synthesis of philosophy of early Nikāya with the upcoming Sarvāstivāda besides Mahayana enabled Aśvaghoṣa to establish the teachings of the Buddha for the salvation of suffering humanity beyond its sectarian limits.

Aśvaghoṣa in order to stress the importance of ardent faith in the Buddha, fervently praises him by using the style that transcended the sectarian considerations.

102 *Saundarānanda* XIII.22-24.

Bibliography

Original Sources

Anguttaranikāya (tr.) Rhys Davids C.A.F. and F.L. Woodward, 5 vols. Pali Text Society,1993-95

Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Ācarya Vasubandhu, Shastri , Swami Dwarikadasa, (ed) Varanasi: Baudha Bharati Series,1998

Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu, (ed. & tr.), Paussin 4 vols, English tr. Leo M. Pruden, Berkeley: Asian Humanity Press,1988

Buddhacarita or Acts of The Buddha, (ed. & tr.) Johnston, E.H., Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1992

Dhammapada (ed. & tr.) Radhakrishan, S., Delhi: Oxford Press,1977

Itivuttaka (tr.) Woodward, F.L., Pali Text Society, London, 2003

Majjhimanikāya (tr.)Horner,I.B.,3vols., Pali Text Society, London, 1997-2000

Saṃyuttanikāya (tr) Rhys Davids C.A.F. and F.L. Woodward, 5 vols. Pali Text Society, London, 1996- 2000

Saundarānanda of Aśvaghoṣa, (ed), Johnston, E.H., Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, rpt.1975

Suttanipáta (ed.) Bapat, P. V., Delhi: Sai Satguru Pub., 1990

Theragātha, Igatpuri: Vipassana Research Centre,1998

Theragātha (tr.) Norman, K.R., pt. I&II, Oxford: Pali Text Society,1998

Therigāthā, Igatpuri: Vipassana Research Centre,1998

Therigāthā (tr) Mrs. Rhys Davids, Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2000

Vibhanga, Igatpuri: Vipassana Research Centre, 1998

Vibhanga (tr) Ven. Thittila, U., Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1988.

Secondary Sources

Covill, Linda, *Handsome Nanda by Asvaghosa,* New York University Press, JJC Foundation,2007

Cowell, E.B., *Buddhist Mahayana Texts*, pt. I, Sacred Books of East, vol.49, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1985

Dey, S. K. *History of Sanskrit Literature,* Calcutta: University of Calcutta,1975

Dhammajoti, K. L. *Abhidharma Doctrines and Controversies on Perception*, HKU: CBS Publication Series, Hong Kong, 2007

Dhammajoti, K.L. *Sarvástiváda Abhidharma*, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 2009

Dutta, N., *Buddhist Sects in India,* Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass,1978

-----"---- *Mahayana Buddhism*, Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashana, 2003

Hirakawa, Akira. *A History of Indian Buddhism, From Sakyamuni to Early Mahayana*, (tr.& ed.) Paul Groner, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass,1998

Johnston, E.H., tr. Buddhacarita- Acts of the Buddha, Motilal Benarsidass, New Delhi, 1998

Law, B.C., *Asvaghosa*, Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal,1946

Williams m. Monier, Sanskrit –English Dictionary, Motilal Benarsidass, N. Delhi, Corrected Edition 2002

Rhys Davids T. W. and William Stede. *Pali-English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1993

Watters, T. *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India (A.D. 629-645*), Vol. I & II, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1996

Warder, A.K., *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass,2000

Ātman (Self) and *Anātman* (No-Self): A Possible Reconciliation

Prof. Bina Gupta
Director, South Asian Studies Program
University of Missouri

In most common expositions of Indian philosophy the two traditions: self and no-self - are taken to be mutually incompatible. The former, having its origin in the Upaniṣads, finds expression in all āstika *darśanas*, though its clearest and most important exposition is found in Advaita Vedānta. The latter having its origin in the teachings of the Buddha finds varied expressions in different schools of Buddhism. The Advaita Vedānta accepts ātman and rejects *anattā*; the Buddhists argue for *anattā* and reject ātman.[1]

My exposition in this paper is based primarily on the teachings of the Gautama Buddha and Śaṃkara, the founders of Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta respectively. Accordingly, unless otherwise specified, my use of the terms "Buddhist" and "Advaitins" refers to the teachings of these founders rather than to the later philosophers of these two traditions. I will begin with an overview of Advaita Vedānta.

Part I

Śaṃkara sums up his entire philosophy as follows: "The *brahman* is truth or real, the world is false (*mithyā*), and the individual self (*jīva*) and the *brahman* are non-different." In order to preserve the integrity of his non-dualistic thesis, Śaṃkara argues that this one reality called in the Upaniṣadic texts "*brahman-ātman,*" is not only the stuff out of which all things are made, but is also the same as the inner self (*ātman*) within each individual self (*jīva*). The empirical world and selves on account of ignorance are superimposed upon this one reality.

Superimposition is erroneous cognition (*mithyā jñāna*), illusory appearance (*avabhāsa*); it is the cognition of "that" in what is "not-that."[2] It is the apprehension of something as something else. It may be of two types: a) apprehending a thing as other than what it is (e.g., perceiving a rope as a snake, the *brahman* appearing as the manifold world of names and forms), and b) apprehending a thing as other than what it is (e.g., a crystal appearing red in the proximity of a red flower). The former is the false ascription of one thing to another, and the latter the false ascription of the attribute of one thing to another. Illusion is not possible in the absence of a substratum, and the object superimposed has an apparent existence dependent on the substratum - which is vaguely

[1] The Sanskrit term *"ātman,"* though often translated as "self," does not refer to the "I," the individual self. Both "*cit*" (usually translated as "consciousness") and "*ātman*" refer to pure consciousness, a kind of trans-empirical consciousness, which not only is different from the individual self, but also forms its basis. In this paper, I will use "self," "soul," "pure consciousness," "real self," "pure subject," "pure self," and "substantial self" interchangeably to connote *ātman* or *cit,* to be distinguished from, the *jīva,* the "empirical self," the "I," the "ego," the "individual self," or the "empirical consciousness."

[2] *adhyāso nāma atasmin tadbuddhih,* Śaṃkara's *"Adhyāsabhāṣya"* of *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (BSBh).

apprehended as "this." There can be no illusion where the substratum is fully apprehended or not apprehended at all. Illusion disappears when the basis is clearly apprehended.

Brahman-ātman, the one undifferentiated objectless and subjectless, self-luminous reality (having no beginning and end), manifests everything in the world. However, until *brahman-ātman* realization, all knowing that takes place in the empirical world holds good. Thus although ultimately devaluing the metaphysical status of the empirical world and the empirical selves to false appearances, Śaṃkara worked hard to preserve the empiricality of things that have qualities and are designated by names.

In his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (BSBh, II.3.50), Śaṃkara states that "the *jīva* is not the highest *ātman*, because it is perceived to be different on account of different limiting adjuncts; it is also not different from the *ātman,* because it is the *ātman* that as *jīvātman* has entered in all bodies. We may call a *"jīva*" a reflection of the *ātman.*" Thus, the *jīva* is both a reality and appearance; it is reality insofar as it is grounded in *ātman* and it is an appearance insofar as it is finite and empirical. In other words, the *jīva* is empirically real. The Advaitins offer several metaphors to explain the status of *jīva,* e.g., the metaphors of reflection[3] and limitation.[4] The *ātman,* the true self, appears to be many, in the same way as one moon in the sky appears to be many when reflected in many pools of water, or the one space appears to be many, owing to many limitations imposed upon it. In short, in Advaita Vedānta, the "I," the subject, (*asmat pratyaya*) designates the empirical self *ultimately* referring back to its groundedness in the *ātman*; the "I" symbolically points in the direction of the *ātman*, the pure self.

Part II

Whereas Śaṃkara following the Upaniṣads postulates an essence, an identical *ātman,* in all individual beings and takes the "I," an individual self, to be a combination of a body and a soul, the Buddha argues that there is no *ātman*. Troubled by the sights of disease, death, old age, etc., the Buddha searched for the truth, attained *nirvāṇa*, and discovered *pratītyasamutapāda* ("dependent arising," or "dependent origination"). In the Buddhist texts, the formula of dependent arising has often been expressed in the following words: "When this is, that comes to be; on the arising of that, this arises. When this is not, that is not; on the cessation of that, this ceases." (*Majjhima Nikāya,* I.262-64.) In other words, depending on the cause, the effect arises; when the cause ceases to exist, the effect also ceases to exist. This doctrine of dependent arising, essentially a doctrine of causality formulated in terms of the twelvefold links, includes within its fold such important interrelated notions as moral responsibility, rebirth, craving, death, consciousness, the nature of psychophysical personality, etc. In the words of the Buddha: "He who perceives causation perceives the *dharma*."

---

3 The Advaitins of the Vivaraṇa school argue that just as the reflection of the sun or the moon appears to be different depending on whether the water is clean or dirty, calm or disturbed, similarly, the reflection of pure consciousness varies according to the degree of ignorance in which it is reflected. They hold that the *jīva* as the reflected image is as real as the prototype.

4 The Advaitins of the Bhāmatī persuasion argue that an individual self is a limitation of pure consciousness on account of ignorance, the limiting factor. Space, though really one, is seen to have been divided in particular spaces, like the space in a room, in a pitcher, and so on. Similarly, the Self, though one, is seen to be many.

(*Majjhima Nikāya*, I.190-91.) There are two corollaries of this causal law: "all things are non-eternal (*anitya*),"[5] and "there is no substantial self (*anattā)*."

"All is impermanent" ("*sarvam anityam"*) was one of the Buddha's frequent utterances. Given that everything is conditional and relative, everything passes through the process of birth, growth, decay, and death. In the early texts, "impermanence" is used synonymously with "arising and passing away." "Impermanent things are indeed conditioned; they are of the nature of arising and passing away. Having come into being they cease to exist" (*Dīgha Nikāya,* II.157). Each factor of the twelvefold links conditions and is conditioned by preceding factors. There is nothing permanent; things are impermanent not because they are momentary, but because they are characterized by arising and perishing. Due to the limitations of our sensory apparatus, we are not able to perceive changes that take place, but change is taking place all the time. Permanence, essence, unchanging substances, exist only in thought, not in reality. There is nothing eternal, neither in the external world nor in the inner life of consciousness. Whatever is reborn is impermanent.

The denial of permanence has important ramifications for the Buddhist account of the self.[6] Not unlike the British philosopher David Hume, the Buddha argues that when we look within ourselves, we do not find any abiding essence, any permanent self, but only a series of successive instants. The empirical self consists of five aggregates intertwined with each other in a complicated manner. These five *skandhas* are: bodily form (matter or body), sensations (feelings, sensations, sense object contact, etc.), perceptions (recognition, understanding, and naming), dispositions (impressions of *karmas*), and consciousness. There is within anyone's life of consciousness a series of bodily consciousness, feelings or affective states, perceptions, conceptions and naming, dispositions (effects of past experiences), and awareness. These five aggregates together are known as "*nāma-rūpa*." *Rūpa* signifies body, and *nāma* stands for various such processes as feelings, sensations, perceptions, ideas, and so on.

The self, as a moment within the life of consciousness, is also a flowing entity, each moment being an S_n. The self, à la Hume, is reducible to $s_1, s_2 \ldots s_n$. Within this flow, there is no identity; each succeeding element (s_n) has a similarity to the just preceding s_{n-1}. These five *skandhas* that constitute an empirical self are impermanent, so they cannot give rise to a permanent self. The Buddha provides many similes to explain the arising of an empirical self. One of his favorite examples was that of a chariot (Warren, 1963, 133). As a chariot is nothing more than an arrangement of axle, wheels, pole and other constituent parts in a certain order, but when we take the constituents apart, there is no chariot; similarly, "I" is nothing but an arrangement of five *skandhas* in a certain order, but when we examine the *skandhas* one by one, we find that there is no permanent entity, there is no "I," there is only a name (*nāma*) and a form (*rūpa*). In short, the Buddha replaces the permanent self S of Advaita by a series, i.e., (S =) $s_1, s_2, s_3 \ldots. S_i, s_{i+1,} s_{i+2,} \ldots$ This series continues through rebirth and is completely terminated in *nirvāṇa.*

[5] There are two aspects of this assertion: negative and positive. The negative thesis states that there is nothing permanent; everything is in a perpetual flux. But there is no unanimity regarding the positive thesis. One version of the positive thesis states that "all things are *anitya*" means "everything is momentary." Modern scholars, e.g., Kalupahana argue that the Buddha only taught the doctrine of impermanence, and that the "doctrine of moments" was "formulated from a *logical* analysis of the process of change" by the later Buddhists (Kalupahana, 1976, 36).

[6] *Anattā* was the Buddha's answer to both the essentialists and non-essentialists alike.

Part III

In my zeal to reconcile these two powerful insights, I looked to the literature of Indian philosophy for help, but to no avail. The help, however, came from Western phenomenology, especially from Edmund Husserl's work on time-consciousness.[7] In this paper I am going to confine myself to only those ideas of Husserl that provide insights into resolving the tension between the Advaita and the Buddhist accounts of the self. To be specific, for my present purposes, I wish to focus on four features of Husserlian account: a method and three theses, all four central to Husserlian phenomenology**.**

Phenomenologists (for example, Husserl) do not generally talk about the "self"; Husserl rather talks about the "I" (the *Ich*), more often translated as "ego." In order to separate the pure subjectivity from the objective world, Husserl employs the method of reduction or *epoch*ē (*Ideas* I, §§ 31-32)**,** which requires that we bracket out everything that is an object, or even a possible object, until we are left with the pure subjectivity. The Phenomenologists usually use the terms "empirical" and "transcendental." Everything empirical is bracketed, so that as though through a process of step-by-step purification, what remains is the transcendental ego, the pure subject.

With the above in mind, let me move to the three theses. The first thesis concerns intentionality. Consciousness, argues Husserl, is intentional in the sense that it is always directed toward something. Such intentional acts as perceiving, believing, imagining, feeling, and willing, are all directed to objects (real, unreal, or ideal) in the world. Irrespective of the ontological status of the object, every act of consciousness intends its object in a certain manner and as having a specific meaning or significance. Husserl calls the object in its specific manner of being intended "*noema.*" Consciousness then is a correlation between "act and its *noema*" (*Husserliana* III, §§ 88 & 98). The acts, holds Husserl, have two poles, the object pole and the subject pole. My perceptions and beliefs, imaginations and affections, willings, and emotional acts, indeed all such acts are performed by an "I." An initial characterization of the self in terms of intentional acts would be to say that the self is the point of origin, the subject pole, of all my intentional acts (*Husserliana* III, § 37; *Husserliana* I, §§ 30-37). It is reflection that constitutes the ego. This is how the ego or the "I" appears in Husserl's discussions of intentionality in the *Ideas I.*[8]

The second thesis concerns the idea of "constitution," which is closely connected to the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental. The intentionality of the subject constitutes the unity of an object and thereby also the unity of the world. The precise sense of constitution is very difficult to determine but the constituted stands midway between being-already-there and being produced by the subject. It rules out the two prevailing pictures of experience: at the one end is the picture of passively receiving what is given, and, at the other end, the picture of actively creating from within. It is indeterminate when considered in light of the opposition between passivity and pure activity. To take it a step further, one can say that all constitution is constitution of meaning. Insofar as an object is a structure of meanings; it is constituted by the subject. Thus, we can say that all empirical is constituted and the transcendental constitutes.

[7] My interpretation is based on Brough's English translation of Husserl's phenomenology of time consciousness and his paper "The Emergence of Absolute Consciousness."

[8] *Ideas I*, § 32: Every consciousness can be reflected upon…; § 45: Prior to reflection there is a pre-reflective awareness of it.

The third thesis concerns temporality. Intending an object, argues Husserl, always takes place within a horizon (*Ideas I*, § 81). Not only is the object perceived or cognized against the background of a context, but the perceiving itself takes place within the horizon of one's mental life. Time, Husserl maintains, is the most comprehensive horizon within which all intentionality functions. Every intentional act occurs within the temporal flow of the subject's consciousness. In this sense, one can say that consciousness is temporal. However, the temporality of consciousness does not consist in a succession of perishing instants. It rather consists in the now's being surrounded by a temporal horizon such that a now, together with its just past, is always retained in consciousness, and the not-yet future is anticipated as emerging into consciousness. Temporality of consciousness always has the structure protention-now-retention. As this structure recedes into the past, the new ones replace it in such a manner that we have a continuous flux of consciousness. Thus, consciousness is a stream of experience (*erlebnisestrom*) in which nothing abides except the protention-now-retention structure. In this stream of experience, the "I" is reduced to the moving stream of consciousness seemingly beginningless and endless. No beginning because every now fulfills a prior protention, no end, because every now that recedes into the past can be revived in memory until it is lost into the darkness of forgetting. The Husserlian ego, even as transcendental, is temporal. The "pure subject," to use Husserl's very difficult expression, "temporalizes"; it is the source of time. It is neither a process in time nor an entity outside of time. As streaming-standing flux,[9] it generates objective temporality.

Part IV

It is now time that we return to the main theme of the paper, i.e., to institute a comparison of Husserl with Śaṃkara and the Buddha. I will begin with Husserl and Śaṃkara.

In reviewing the method and the three theses discussed above, we see that in both, the self as pure subject (*ātman*) is the condition of the possibility of objectivity and in that sense it is transcendental. However, on the Advaita view, unlike Husserl, there is no inherent intentionality in the *ātman,* which cannot of its own resources be intentional due to a deep conceptual as well as a phenomenological problem with regard to the nature of consciousness or subjectivity. The Advaitins define consciousness as self-luminous (*svayam prakāśatva*); it is not intentional. Consciousness is said to be *prakāśa eka rasa*, i.e., manifestation is its only essence. In Advaita discourse, *avidyā* functions as the source of intentionality by building upon earlier traces of *avidyā* in an endless process. The relation between the pure subject and *avidyā* in Advaita is very difficult to grasp, yet this relationship is central to its metaphysics.

In the very opening chapter of BSBh, an opponent is made to raise the question: how can the subject and the object though opposed to each other as light and darkness be together? In response, Śaṃkara says: "true, it is precisely the reason why this, viz., consciousness, as being of an object, should be false (*mithyā)*." A very strange conclusion indeed! Instead of asserting that the phenomenon of intentionality testifies to the fact that the subject and the object are not opposed to each other, Śaṃkara treats intentionality as purely phenomenal; it does not belong to the order of reality. Thus

[9] *"Urmodal stehendes-strömendes Leben und darin meine urprimordialen Implikationen, erste Schicht der Weltkonstitution, die meine urmodale Eigenheit bzw. meine Ur-'Monade' ausmachen." Husserliana* (Materialien Series), VIII, 20. Again, *"Und zwar ist dieser urlebendige Strom, die lebendige, in ihrer Lebendigkeit strömende Bewußtseinsgegenwart—mein." Husserliana* (Erste Philosophie Series), XIV, 436.

there are two possible moves: (1) one may regard that the very phenomenon of intentionality shows that the self-shining inner consciousness, the pure subject, is nevertheless directed towards objects and that both the inward and outward directedness are constitutive of it. (2) Alternately, one may hold that the self-shining consciousness in its pure inwardness is the truth of consciousness and relegate the outward directedness of intentionality to phenomenal appearance. Husserl chooses the first, and Śaṃkara the second. It is not an exaggeration to say that in many different ways the second move constitutes an important strand of Indian spiritual thinking. We owe to Śaṃkara its theoretical formulation but its most famous practical formulation is found in Patañjali's *Yogasūtras*, where *yoga* is defined as "cessation of mental modifications (*cittavṛtti nirodha*), that arise under the influence of the objects" (*Yogasūtras,* I.1.1).

Consciousness on the Advaita view *cannot constitute*; it can *only show* that which is already constituted by virtue of its luminosity. For the Advaitin, objects have do not have any meaning intrinsically; it is their mutual relationships in the world that confers meaning on them. Thus, from the standpoint of the phenomenal world, the *brahman* as *Īśvara* is said to be the creator of the world. Consciousness cannot confer meaning on objects; it at once brings to light the meaning that the world confers on them as well as their falsity. On the other hand, the idea of "meaning" is an integral part of the Husserlian phenomenology, in the absence of which Husserlian intentionality cannot work. In Husserl's writings intentionality is a correlation between *noesis* and *noema*, act and meaning (*Ideas I,* §§ 88 & 99).

Consciousness in Advaita is not only non-intentional and non-constitutive, but also non-temporal. Time belongs to the form of the objective world, and does not apply to the pure subject. Every intentional act takes place within the temporal flow of the subject's consciousness. Husserl was really concerned with the problem regarding how this flux comes to be constituted. He eventually came to recognize that a flux could be presented as a flux only to a consciousness that is not a flux, a consciousness that comprehends the flux as a whole. He then realized that there is a dimension of consciousness that is "standing while streaming." The metaphor is interesting. The streaming absolute consciousness is neither a substance that remains permanent (like Śaṃkara's *cit* or *ātman* which is not a substance) nor it is a container that holds the flux within it. If it is standing, then it is not moving; this not moving is nothing but another aspect of the moving. Thus the thesis does not amount to positing two levels of reality. In other words, it is not an ontological thesis, but a phenomenological thesis with regard to the way the time is experienced at different levels. Using Husserlian metaphor, the Advaitic *ātman* may be said to be standing but not streaming. The Buddhist *anattā* as a union of five impermanent *skandhas*, on the other hand, as we will see next, may be said to be streaming, but not standing.

It is not an exaggeration to say that in many ways the Buddha is much closer to Husserl than Śaṃkara. Both Husserl and Buddha instantiate what is usually called "process philosophies." They both hold that there is no enduring *ātman*; there are only experiences.

In order to provide a successful challenge to the Advaita theory of the *ātman*, the Buddhist may simply appeal to phenomenological basis to demonstrate that there is no such eternal spiritual substance. The Buddhist may argue that in directing my attention to my own inner life in search of this presumed *ātman*, I find no such *ātman*. If there were such an *ātman*, then an experience of it would be available; however, one cannot indeed identify such an experience. Any experience that one may have would be a unique event in time, occurring at a particular moment, and if it has

an object distinguished from experience, then that object must also share in its temporality and passing character. The supposed experience of an eternal substantial entity then would be a contradiction in terms. The argument may be elaborated and defended as follows.

Let there be a putative experience e_1 occurring at the moment t_1. This e_1 by hypothesis is an evidencing or presenting of an eternal entity O, that is to say, whose being is not restricted to t_1. The Buddhist question would be: how is this possible? Whence does e_1 derive its ability to present, render evidence, and testify to the supposed eternal object o_1, which goes far beyond O at t_1? If every experience presents its own object, then e_1 will present o_1, e_2 will present o_2, and so forth. There would be no experience, no E, whose object is O. This argument obviously has some limitations, and I must direct the attention of my readers to these limitations. The picture of experience as consisting of a series of instantaneous events $e_1, e_2, e_3 \ldots$, each having its own object $o_1, o_2, o_3 \ldots$, is suspiciously simple. There are many features of our experience of things, including my experience of myself, which do not fall into this pattern. For we do not simply see a thing at a moment, but we also see it as being the same as that we had seen before. At each moment, we not only experience a momentary objective event, but also remember what we had seen before, recognize the presumed identity of a thing or see through its pretended identity, viz., its difference from what was seen before. In other words, we see similarities and differences, which lead to an experience of a universal class whose members I have experienced before and remember now. In short, experience is not merely a serial ordering of e_1, e_2, e_3, etc., but also involves a synthesis, a combination, a putting together, or in the Kantian language, a synoptic view of several things together.

Granting this intervention, the Buddhist might still ask: what does it substantiate? Can such a synoptic vision of what is now and what was in the past, that is, the putting together of the past and the present evidence the being of an eternal entity? It can utmost present an entity now as being the same as that entity then, but it cannot present to us an entity having no beginning and no end, unchanging, and timeless. Even assuming that it presents a limited identity and continuity through a slice of time from t_2 through t_4, the experience of it would occupy the moment t_4; it cannot testify to the existence of an eternal being. In other words, e_4 may under certain circumstances testify to the presence of an object that remains the same from t_2 through t_4. This indeed is possible, and this is how we experience the sundry familiar things of the world around us.

Husserl also represents the experience of an ego by the metaphor of a stream. A stream is not a substantial identity, there is nothing that endures in the flow of the stream, as Heraclitus pointed out, we never step into the same water twice; it is constantly changing. But this picture of a stream or experiences, as Husserl presents it, is considerably more sophisticated than the picture the Heraclitean flux evokes. This sophisticated picture allows Husserl to confer greater explanatory power on experience than it would otherwise have. First of all, he rejects the picture of the flow of time as consisting of perishing instants. There is no more now that divides the past from the future or the no-more from the not-yet. On the contrary, in Husserl's account, the now as it emerges fulfills not only the past expectations, but also carries within it both a memory of what is just gone and an anticipation of what is just about to come. The immediate no-more and the just not-yet are the two horizons within the bosom of the now. This picture enables Husserl to account for a certain continuity of our time consciousness instead of a mere series of perishing instants. But the continuity of this stream of experience is not the continuity of a timeless being underlying the flow of time, but a continuity that is being constituted by the flow. Thus, experience, for Husserl, is not a series of instantaneous events, e_1, e_2, e_3, etc., but a process in which experiences as they recede into

the past are held fast in memory, which can be reactivated at any time and thereby be made present or presentified. By the act of recollection of the past, or what Husserl calls "*wiedererinnerung*" a stretch of time in the past can be presentified at a moment now, and this personification can be a valid recollection of the past although presentified now. Likewise an experience of a moment, a now, has often the ability to refer intentionally to a future possibility, even if that possibility is not now actualized. By virtue of such cross references, we are not left with the solipsism of the present, total confinement to the now, but we are able to build up identities and continuities which always go beyond the confines of the now. Time apart from the flow of consciousness is an abstraction, and neither Husserl nor Buddha had any interest in it.

The above discussion of experience makes it obvious that both the Buddha and Husserl describe a person's experience as a stream (*pravāha*), both recognize that in course of this stream of experience the familiar objects of the world as well as the identities of persons are constituted. Notwithstanding the close affinity between the Husserlian and the Buddhist accounts, one must not lose sight of the fact that whereas the Buddha describes the flow in terms of arising and perishing, Husserl describes it in terms of not-yet and no-more. In many respects the Buddha's account is more radical because he does not admit a now intervening between the two. There is no simple being that arises and perishes; there is simply arising and perishing.

Nevertheless, since there is arising and perishing, one might ask: are the events of consciousness, once they perish, gone forever? Do they disappear into nothingness? Is this not very different from the Husserlian thesis that what is now is still retained even when receding into more and more past so that it can be revived or awakened by memory? It ceases to be the now, a new now replaces it, but the past now is still there to be recalled. Husserl recognized, as stated earlier, that beyond a certain point, the past nows go back into the darkness of forgetfulness (for example, of the early childhood, or as the Buddha and Śaṃkara would say, "of the past lives") there is still the possibility that the past *nows* penetrate into this darkness more and more. Thus it is not surprising that in his scattered thoughts on death, Husserl considered the possibility of dying as falling into a deep sleep. The Buddha took a more or less a clean, less hypothetical, attitude to the possibility of recalling the past experiences even across the boundaries of birth and death. That is why I suspect that even in the absence of a rigorous description of the flow and a theory of time, the Buddha and Husserl are engaged in the same sort of activities.

To sum up: both the Buddha and Husserl do not recognize an enduring *ātman* that has all the experiences. The Buddha points out that the experiences of the events of consciousness by virtue of their union create the semblance of an owner, an "I." For Husserl the I is both empirical and transcendental: it is empirical when considered to be part of this world, transcendental when considered as the source of the constitution of the world itself. In other words, the pure subject or the transcendental ego is the "I" for Husserl. Husserl draws our attention to this thesis in his numerous accounts regarding how consciousness from its original temporal flux becomes unified and centered in an ego. The resulting Husserlian position is closer to the Buddhist view that the self is really a series of psycho-physical events unified by a sense of "I" rather than to the Advaitin unchanging spiritual substance or soul.

In the Advaita Vedānta, pure subject is reached only when its association with the "I" is removed. Husserl's position is supported by the fact that the word "I" always refers to the self of the speaker. Even Śaṃkara acknowledges it in the opening paragraph of his BSBh, when he says that

the self is the referent of the "I," whereas the not-self is the referent of "you," and by implication, of "this." But this admission should be understood in the proper context. The "I" does not refer to the subject of the speaker in the same way as the name Bina Gupta does. The "I" is not a name. Nor does it have a purely conceptual meaning, viz., the speaker, whoever she or he may be.

In the context of discussing the question of the relation between the empirical and the universal self, the Advaitins often use the metaphor of space and point out how one space appears to be many owing to various limiting factors. Given that the *jīva* and the *ātman* are non-different, one could venture the following suggestion: while the *jīva* is continually moving, streaming (caught up in *saṃsāra,* which, in the Indian tradition goes from this life to the next), the *ātman* is a standing, unmoving, and unindividuated or undifferentiated dimension of the *jīva*. There is a tendency among writers on Vedānta to separate the *jīva* and the *ātman* ontologically which may be a mistake in view of Śaṃkara's explicit statement that the *jīva* is non-different from the *brahman.* The statement suggests that the unmoving, undifferentiated unindividuated *ātman* —for which all flux, stream, motion, change are possible objects—lies at the deepest recesses of the *jīva*. While the Upaniṣads show us a path which one can follow to reach this depth (the main stages in the path being waking, dreaming, deep dreamless sleep, and the beyond), Husserl struggles with time consciousness, shows another path by following which one begins to make sense of the thesis which originally might have seemed to be inaccessible to a phenomenological disclosure. Thus, though Husserlian phenomenology still remains at some distance from Advaita Vedānta phenomenology, we begin to realize that that distance is not as great as we initially thought it to be. Husserl's two layers of selfhood--the Humean flow which generates temporality and an absolute standing-streaming consciousness which remains the same amidst streaming - are phenomenologically given. The self in its totality is both; it is a flow in time like the Buddhist union of impermanent *skandhas*, but it also stands above time like the Advaitin *ātman.*

Part V

This final and the concluding section points to further directions that may be pursued and the lines of thought that may be developed in connection with the comparison under consideration.

Apropos here is Husserl's understanding of Buddhism. After reading Karl Eugen Neuman's German translation of various sections of the classical Buddhist texts *Suttapiṭaka,* Husserl in his very brief article entitled "*Über die Reden Gotamo Buddhos*," (Husserl, "On the Discourses of Gautama Buddha," 1925, 18-19) characterizes the thoughts of the Buddha as having a "transcendental character." Husserl states that Buddhism is "probably the highest flower of Indian religiosity, a religiosity which looks purely inward in vision and deed—which, I would say, is not 'transcendent,' but 'transcendental.'" He further adds that Buddhism "is concerned with a religious and ethical method of the highest dignity for spiritual purification and pacification, a method thought through and practiced with an almost incomparable internal coherence, energy and nobility of the mind. Buddhism can only be paralleled with the highest formations of philosophical and religious spirit of our European culture." (Chattopadhyaya, Embree, and Mohanty, 1992, 25-26).

Buddhism is "transcendental," argues Husserl, because it suggests an inner attitude, the "pure seeing." In Buddhism, each practitioner focuses on his own subjectivity by directing his

attention purely toward his own inner life. In such an attitude the world becomes a mere phenomenon in subjectivity. The Buddha shows us the possibility of "essential seeing," and the Buddhist *bodhi* provides insights into the absolute practical truth.

Anyone familiar with the thoughts of Husserl, knows well that for Husserl "pure *theōria*" oriented towards universality is the only form of intellectual activity that is worthy of being called "philosophy." His use of the term "transcendental" to describe Buddhism —the term he uses to describe the theoretical activity of his own transcendental phenomenology—is revealing. In so describing, Husserl assigns to Buddhism a theoretical status as high as his own transcendental philosophy. It points to the fact that in his estimation the importance of Buddhism is not simply limited to ethical-religious aspects. Husserl concludes the paper by noting that he is not suggesting that there are no differences between the Buddhist and the European transcendental attitudes, but he does not discuss what these differences might be.

In another very short text written in 1926 entitled "Socrates - Buddha,"[10] Husserl compares his own transcendental phenomenology to the conceptions found in the Buddha and Socrates. Husserl also outlines some important differences between the Buddhist and the European transcendental attitudes. The Buddhist reflective attitude is directed purely inwards in which one uses the method of meditational practices to withdraw from the mundane life in order to realize the highest religious and ethical ideal. Greek philosophers use this reflective attitude to make a distinction between *epistemē* and *doxa*, i.e., knowledge and opinion. This reflective attitude, argues Husserl, signifies the beginning of a "philosophical attitude," which shows to the Buddha and Socrates the path to attain self-realization, *nirvāṇa* for the Buddha and virtuous life for Socrates. Such an attitude is neither theoretical nor practical. He calls this attitude a kind of "universal attitude," which encompasses both the theoretical and the practical within its fold. It is "accomplished in the transition from the theoretical to the practical" in which *theōria* arising from *epochē* of all practices gives rise to a new praxis whose goal is to elevate humanity based on theoretical insights. It does so "according to the norms of truth of all forms, to transform it from the bottom up into a new humanity made capable of an absolute self-responsibility on the basis of absolute theoretical insights" (Carr, 1970, 283). The Buddhist meditational technique of relinquishing craving, clinging, attachment compares very favorably to Husserl's *epochē*, i.e., suspension of all natural beliefs and attitudes. Thus, although Husserl generally regarded phenomenology as a theoretical science, he gradually came to recognize the significance of the practical, which makes his difference from Buddhism still less.

In the preceding paragraphs, Husserl makes two important distinctions in the context of discussing the Buddha's philosophy: 1) the distinction between the "transcendental" and the "transcendent," and 2) the theory practice distinction. Before concluding this paper, I will discuss these distinctions in the context of Advaita Vedānta.

There is no evidence to support that Husserl ever read any translation of the Advaita classics; whenever Husserl mentions "Indian thought," he means "Buddhism."[11] I wonder if he had in

[10] According to Schuhmann Husserl had discussed Buddhism in a seminar held in the winter semester of 1925-26. However, the notes of this seminar in Husserl Archives are very sketchy and do not provide a basis for an informed decision (Schuhmann, 1992, "Husserl and Indian Thought," 28-29. Also see, *Lau,* Kwok-ying (*2004-2005), "Husserl, Buddhism,* and the Problematic of the Crisis of European"

[11] Schuhmann notes: whenever Husserl mentions Indian thought in his manuscripts, he refers to Neuman's German translation of the Buddhist scriptures." Karl Schuhmann. "Husserl and Indian Thought" in *Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy,* D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Lester Embree and Jitendranath Mohanty (eds.), New Delhi, India: The Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1992, pp.25-26.

fact read any Advaita classics how he would have characterized Śaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta. Given that Śaṃkara, like the Buddha, focuses on "pure seeing," Husserl would have no problem in characterizing Śaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta as "transcendental."[12] However, in Advaita the *brahman-ātman* is not only "transcendental," it is also "transcendent" because in its pure nature, *brahman-ātman* is beyond all sensuous experiences. In the absence of *ātman* there would be no knowledge, empirical or otherwise.

Regarding the theory-practice distinction, it is worth noting that in Advaita Vedānta no amount of meditational practices can "bring about" *mokṣa*, which is not an effect. Were it an effect, it would be perishable. When ignorance is removed, the self shines forth in its purity. *Mokṣa* is not a state reached by mental purification. Meditational practices, noble actions, contribute to the purification of the mind (*cittavṛtti)* and make the agent a more appropriate aspirant (*adhikārī*) for knowledge. Knowledge alone "brings about" *mokṣa*; it is realizing one's non-difference from the *brahman*. The *brahman* simply *is*; it does not *really* become.

Having said this let me conclude by noting that the theory practice distinction merits further examination. The thesis - of those who repeatedly argue that pure theoretical thinking requires renouncing all practical interests - is circular, as it requires one to distinguish between theoretical and practical interests only when the distinction between theory and practice is already presupposed. Is there such a thing as pure theory except in formal logic? There is always a theory of practice and a practice of theory; the two go hand in hand. However, this is not the place to enter into a detailed examination of the theory-practice distinction. For our purposes the following would suffice.

The goal of either Śaṃkara or the Buddha was not to construct a philosophical system, but to show the path to the truth, *mokṣa* and *nirvāṇa* respectively. Such an eschatological concern is hardly to be expected from a Western phenomenologist. Husserl wrote in the midst of great personal suffering from the escalation of Nazism in Germany. The political crisis of the 30's is well known. He believed that transcendental phenomenology - by demonstrating the autonomy of the subject and the community of subjects—would be able to put a stop to the powerful forces of objectification. It goes without saying that Husserl was not hoping for either *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa* for the West. However, it is important to underscore the point that Husserl was also inspired by the idea that discovering the truth about our deeper selves, i.e., about the true nature of consciousness can serve the highest practical purposes of life.

[12] On the Advaita account, consciousness in one sense is transcendent because in its pure nature it goes beyond all sensuous experience. However, it is also transcendental, in the sense that consciousness is the basic presupposition of all knowing. In the absence of consciousness no knowledge would be possible, empirical or otherwise.

References

Brough, John B. (1978) "The Emergence of Absolute Consciousness in Husserl's Early

Dīgha Nikāya (2007) In Dialogues of the Buddha. 3 Vols. Rhys Davids (trans.). New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Gupta, Bina. Cit (Consciousness). New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Husserl, Edmund. (1952) Ideas: General Introduction to Phenomenology, W. R. Boyce Gibson (trans.). New York: Macmillan Company.

Husserl, Edmund. (1964) Cartesian Meditations, Doris Cairns (trans.). The Hague: M. Nijhoff.

Husserl, Edmund. (1970) "Über die Reden Gotamo Buddhos," ("On the Discourses of Gautama Buddha") in Aufsätz und Vorträge (1922-1937), Husserliana XXVII, Thomas Nenon and Hans Rainer Sepp (eds.). Dodrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989, 125-126.

Husserl, Edmund. (1970)The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy, David Carr (trans.). Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University.

Husserl, Edmund. (1990) "On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917) John B. Brough (trans.). Dodrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Husserl, Edmund. (2010) "Sokrates-Buddha." Husserl Studies, 26 (1), 1-17.

Kalupahana, David (1976) Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis. Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii.

Lau, Kwok-ying (2004-2005) "Husserl, Buddhism and the Problematic of the Crisis of European Sciences," www.cuhk.edu.hk/rih/phs/events/200405_Peace

Nikāya, Aṅguttara (1960) 5 Vols. Woodward, F. L. (trans.) London: Luzac and Company, Ltd.

Nikāya, Majjhima (2004) 3 Vols., The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings, I. B. Horner (ed.). New Delhi: Motial Banarsidass.

Patañjali. (1995) The Yogasūtras of Patañjali, K. D. Prithipaul (trans.). New Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass.

Philosophy, D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Lester Embree, and Jitendranath Mohanty (eds.). Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.

Śaṃkara. (1988) Brahmasūtrabhāṣya J. L. Shastri (ed.). New Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass.

Schuhmann, Karl. (1992) "Husserl and Indian Thought," in Phenomenology and Indian

Upaniṣads. (1973) Eight Upaniṣads with the Commentary of Śaṇkaracarya, 2 vols. Gambhirananda, Swami (trans.). Calcutta, India, Advaita Ashrama.

Warren, H. Clark. (1963) Buddhism in Translations. New York: Atheneum.

Writings On Consciousness." Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals, Elliston and McCormick (eds.). Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Buddhist Doctrines of Identity and Impermanence in the Western Mind

Donna M. Giancola

Deeply rooted in Aristotle's notion of substance, Platonic form and Judeo-Christian metaphysics, for the western mind the Buddhist doctrines of *anatman* and impermanence present a major stumbling block. And there is no quick fix. How does one reconcile the apparent continuity and connectedness of personal existence –which gives rise to the notion of the self with the idea that personal consciousness is reducible to conditionality?

In Buddhism the idea of a transcendental or eternal self is denied as non-substantial and impermanent: a non-verifiable metaphysical entity that leads to grasping, craving and suffering. Buddhism posits that things continually change, are continually reducible and recyclable, and that no inherent existence or metaphysical "self" exists but rather a series of aggregates give rise to the experience so that consciousness itself is causally conditioned. As applied to the notion of no- self the one who is reborn and the one who dies and the one who follows the path and the one who realizes enlightenment are neither the same nor different selves. With the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence an analysis of the notion of the "self" breaks down into layers to discover that the self does not exist independently at all. Because of simultaneous arising and falling of each moment the self exists as essentially empty.

Nevertheless, for many westerners, at least, the idea of a permanent self receives reinforcement through a network of various phenomena. We live as if we had a fixed continuous self, from one moment to the next, one day to the next, etc., due to our perception of constancy. This sense of ongoing empirical self is often misunderstood to mean that there exists a metaphysical self, which transcends the changes taking place in our physical and mental surrounds. But as the idea of the self becomes evident through various phenomenon like language and interdependent arising, the question of how exactly the idea of self emerges on a conventional/empirical level when it does not emerge at all on an ultimate level still begs an answer.

I live in my western skin and I meditate in western mind and I worry about how we live. In recent years much awareness has evolved concerning the philosophical issued raised by living in a growing global and multicultural world. Not just tolerance, but empathy based on philosophical understanding is increasingly essential if we are to maintain ecological sustainability and the continuation of life on this planet. For many westerners the principles and practices of Buddhism have helped to promote awareness, well-being, health, peace of mind and compassion. That so many westerners have sought solace and refuge in the teachings of the Buddha and Buddhism in general is a testament to humanity's desire to alleviate suffering. This is all very hopeful. The idea that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," has long since passed. However, the road to enlightenment holds some particular and peculiar stumbling blocks for the western mind, specifically, the doctrine of *anatman* .

In western cultures, at least, we live as if we had a fixed, permanent self. We think of ourselves as the same person from one moment to the next to one day to the next. This sense of on-going self is often interpreted to mean that there exists a metaphysical self which transcends the mental and physical changes. However, Buddhism posits that things continually change, are continually reducible and reconstructable, and that no inherent existence or metaphysical self exists, but rather a series of aggregates, causally conditioned which give rise to the waves of consciousness for which there is no need to attach "the self." Nevertheless the illusion of self exists, in fact seems necessary. For a westerner, how does one reconcile the apparent continuity of personal existence – which gives rise to the notion of the self with the idea that the personal self is non-substantial and reducible to conditionality?

In the course of this paper I will focus on some of the underlying metaphysical assumptions and philosophical issues many westerns face in studying Buddhism: specifically, the difference between the western notions of substance and causality and the Buddhist notion of causal continuity. In addition, I intend to examine how and why the role of substantiality and self have become so intertwined in the western mind and how the Buddhist doctrine of *anatman* can facilitate movement from fixed notions of substantiality to a deeper understanding of the continuing process of sustainability and life on this planet. Before moving on to a comparative analysis of how the west understands the doctrine *anatman*, a few words on Aristotle's notion of substance might be helpful to explain the continued fixation the west seems to have on substance.

Briefly, for Aristotle the question of Being is the question of substance. According to Aristotle things are said to have being in so far as they have reference to "some one nature". The question of substance then, depends on the nature of this one. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle analyzes the various senses of "being' as figures of predication. Here he establishes the category of substance as primary. Aristotle explains that substance has two senses; the ultimate subject, which cannot be further predicated by something else, and whatever has individual and separate existence. Later, in the text in BK *Zeta,* he distinguishes four further senses of substance, as essence, "what a thing is," as universal, as genus, and as substrate. Here he states that it is substance as substrate that is primary. Substance itself is further broken down as matter, as form and as the combination. Aristotle specifies that of these three it is more truly form which is primary substance. Here he makes a crucial distinction between form in matter and pure form as separated substance.

For Aristotle, substance emerges, then, in two final senses, the individual thing as form and matter, and form as essence, what a thing is, existing in and of itself apart from matter. All forms therefore, are called being only in so far as they have a reference to the separated substances. Replete with Platonic elements, the entire *Metaphysics* can be said to be a doctrine of form. "Being", the proper object of metaphysics remains for Aristotle the unchanging nature of separated substances. Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is not concerned with particulars as such but "being as being," so that Being itself cannot be predicated. Aristotle referring to metaphysics as the divine science is following Parmenides' claim that Being is unchanging and one definite kind of nature. Hence the separated substances, or pure forms which exists apart from matter form the principles of motion and account for the various motions of the heavenly bodies.

All this, brings us to Aristotle's notion of the unmoved mover(s). For many medieval philosophers this translated to the idea of a supreme mover or God which for Aristotle was the eternal source of motion, both the efficient and final cause. In the *Physics* and again in the first book of

the *Metaphysics,* Aristotle analyzes four types of causality (material, formal. efficient and final). Wisdom then becomes an understanding of causes and first principles. To know for Aristotle, then is to know by means of a cause. Aristotle sought to account for change by seeking an unchanging substance behind the elements to which changing qualities could adhere. Change is a matter of causality, a movement from actuality to potentiality, based on matter, form and privation of particular things. However, in order for change itself to occur there must be distinct efficient cause. Every change, every motion requires a principle, then the world in general, the universe itself require a prime mover. Aristotle maintains that the ultimate source of eternal motion must be an unchanging non-sensible substance. The umoved mover or prime mover, then is the ultimate cause, simple and unitary, and is the basic ground of the order of the universe by being the source of eternal motion that provides general conditions for all other on-going processes. The prime mover's principle reality is thought, contemplative self thinking thought, or thought of thought, and thereby does not move itself, but causes motion by desire or attraction as the final cause. The unmoved mover then is both the final and efficient cause. The whole universe for Aristotle, then is substantial based and is a teleological caused, and as he says "does nothing in vain." [1]

One could argue that this single most important intellectual breakthrough the west could experience would be to abandon its fixation on substance and form. Indeed many disciplines in the west are proceeding along these lines precisely and breaking through traditional categories that bind us to false notions of self. Fields such as neuropsychology, physics, deep ecology and feminist philosophy are breaking out of dualistic models of thinking and appropriating Buddhist principles and practices to form a more organic and holistic approach, one not mired in rigid metaphysical assumptions. However, this habit of thought is not easily shaken. We are after all steeped in thousands of years of Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian religions. Ever since the time of Plato, if not before, western thought has been formed by notions of the immortality of the soul, eternal forms and mind and body dualism. Even Aristotle's critique of the Platonic forms does nothing to help the situation, except to add another layer, called substance and mode of change, called causality. Aristotle's notion of substance has been accused of hindering much of the later development of what is now western science. Post Newtonian physics and neuropsychology bear little resemblance to Aristotle's basic categories and notions of form and matter, which have been shattered by sub-atomic physics. Unfortunately, this does not completely translate to everyday thinking for your average westerner who still clings to traditional metaphysical categories and western religious thought.

We are taught in the west that the Buddha's teachings on the "Middle Way" constitute a path between two extremes; eternalism (belief in an eternal subsisting reality) and materialism (belief that all life is reducible to the physical/material world). The Buddha held that whatever our metaphysical beliefs, whether the soul survives the death of the body, or whether god (s) exist/s or not, are purely speculative and non-verifiable from a standpoint of knowledge and reality. The nature of the path for Buddhist is causal, phenomenological and empirical, and requires no metaphysical assertion beyond itself. Such a path we are told is the release from suffering into liberation or Nirvana. According to the Buddhist doctrines all existence is characterized as impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-substantial. It is not that existence is "non-existent" just not self-existent. It is the metaphysical belief in self-existence that accounts for our suffering and bondage. In arguing against an eternalist position of a permanent or eternal self the Buddha posited that we are a bundle of perceptions, "a group of aggregates, not discrete and discontinuous, but connected and continuous by causality."[2]

[1] Aristotle's De caelo, A4, 271a 33.

[2] David Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy, A Historical Analysis (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press: 1976), 39.

According to the Buddha the idea of a permanent or transcendental self was an unverifiable metaphysical entity that led to further grasping, craving and suffering. However this does not lead to complete materialism because of the continuity of the causal process and in denying the metaphysical self the Buddha did not deny re-birth or moral responsibility. The challenge, here, for the western mind, then, is to learn to think in terms of causal continuity rather that substantial causality.

Of course, as the Buddhist say, when one makes the cause the effect is there, may or may not be the case with Aristotle depending on how one understands efficient causality. While Aristotle's four types of causality blend into the final cause which itself is spiritual and spherical in effect there is no higher order of causal thinking unfolding into a matrix of conditionality. Aristotle's causality tends to be linear, temporal and horizontal, meaning it passes through time but does not pierce it. Causality is not vertical or conditional, and not seen as existing independently of a first/final cause.

This notion of causality operating through independently existing things has predominated much of the western methodology in the philosophy, science, health and medicine and psychology for many centuries. For the western mind the Buddha's notion of causality can be very liberating, especially, understood in the context of alleviating the fixation on substance. The primary difference being that in Buddhism causality is explained as causal continuum, a matrix, and not as transcendental realm or as something adhering to substance. With the Buddha's denial of substance, reality is explained by causal relations and the western mind is left with a huge gap/emptiness in understanding.

In Buddhism, the law of causality and conditioned phenomenon is a radical vision unlike anything presented in western philosophy. It goes beyond a linear understanding of causality and posits a causal continuum. The universe as a causal network implies that all given phenomenon are dependent not on one isolated or immutable cause, but upon innumerable casual factors and conditions, every one of which joins in the production of the sum total of what is. All becomes relative and conditioned. There are no individual substances just a series of interwoven matrixes of conditioned phenomena that give rise to existence. According to David Kalupahana the aspect of conditionality is most essential to the causal continuum in that in provides for causal uniformity and allows for a coherent explanation of the life process without subscribing to any metaphysical theories of essentialism. The causal process is sufficient to explain the continuity of a thing or being without positing a self or substance. In the Buddha's "Discourse on Causal Relations," he maintains that everything in the world can be explained by the law of causality, its conditioned phenomena and the relationship existing between them. This notion of causality refutes any theories of self causation, external causation and any combination of the two.

Causality, for the Buddhist explains the arising and passing away of all things and therefore all things are under the corollaries of impermanence, unsatisfactory, and non-substantiality. Impermanence is an empirical account of change and synonymous with arising, passing away, birth and destruction. Because of impermanence it follows that all things are unsatisfactory. Because of our desires we crave satisfaction and suffer because no things offer permanence or permanent happiness. While the average westerner can certainly grasp the cause and effect relationship of desire to suffering as impermanence and non-satisfaction, the third corollary, non-substantiality, does not fit in with their metaphysical predilections and challenges our assumptions about the causation of the human personality.

However, on what one would call a conventional or empirical level, the self seems necessary to survive and seems in every moment of sensory, ephemeral perceptions. Language exemplifies the conventional necessity of the self with words like "I" which are *sin qua* non of grammar. The common western belief in a subsistent reality holds that the self consists of an unchanging structure or nature that has various experiences and persists though time (and maybe beyond), although at no point can we actually point to anything that exists independently. David Hume captures this notion when he says "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*... I never catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but perception." The only way to understand this act of observation is not by attaching it to a self but by understanding that nothing about it remains constant. What we call the "self" can never be extracted out from the process of perception/experience. Nevertheless the illusion of a permanent self receives reinforcement through a network of phenomena all part of the human experience.

One of major points stemming from a Buddhist analysis of the self is that the Buddha's denial of a permanent identity was not a denial of continuity. The "self" is analyzed in terms of aggregates, material form, feeling, perception, disposition and consciousness. The illusion of the "self" often comes as mistaking one of these five aggregates as permanent and unchanging. These aggregates themselves, however are causally conditioned, including consciousness. The Buddha's reject of a metaphysical entity or permanent self is based on the assertion that consciousness itself is causally conditioned and contingent. In arguing against self or external causation the Buddha emphatically denied the existence of a causal agent. "Rejecting the idea of a permanent consciousness that functions as the subject or agent, the Buddha insisted that he has in many ways spoken of consciousness as being causally produced and that apart from causes there would be no arising of consciousness."[3] All cognitive events, physical and non-physical result from the aggregates' causal interplay. In replacing the agent or cognizing "I" with a play of causal factors resulting in momentary cognitive events, the Buddhist tradition treats the cognizing agent as merely another way of referring to the embodied and dynamic functioning of the five aggregates. Consciousness exists from one moment to the next, from one lifetime to the next by a series of causal links. What is carried over from one moment to the next, from one lifetime to the next is a causal pattern, the stream of consciousness or the stream of becoming. "This unconscious mental process constitutes the stream of becoming and maintains continuity between two lives without interruption… but itself exists in a state of flux."[4] Our experience of the world thus takes shape not through a unified permanent self or causal agent but through the bundling of the continually changing aggregates and conditioned processes. Because of the simultaneous arising and falling of each moment the self exists as essentially empty, i.e., non-substantial.

Yet, dharmas emerge. Dharma, Sanskrit for what holds together, bear or sustain, can refer to several things in Buddhism. In terms of the question of self it refers to the way things arise. "At rebirth one dharma arises, while another stops, but the two processes take place almost simultaneously. Therefore the first act of consciousness in the new existence is neither the same as the act of consciousness in the previous existence, nor is it another."[5] Each dharma depends on the conditions of the dharma which proceeded it, and those conditions themselves originated interdependently based on the five aggregates. Thereby emerges karma, the idea that that all phenomena arise in dependence on the conditions which cause and proceed them, and give rise to

[3] David Kalupahana, Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975), 119.
[4] Ibid., 118.
[5] Trans. Conze, Edward, "The Questions of King Milinda," Buddhist Scriptures, (New York: Penguin Classics, 1959).

another series of conditions. This arising of events adds to the growing sense that phenomena exist in opposition. No matter how well we may understand the Buddhist logic of no-self, the notion of self still arises. We come to understand that the self and the no-self somehow co-exist. Something and nothing occur simultaneously.

The principle of interdependent co-arising informs us that in order for something to exist it must participate in a relationship. One reaches nirvana by understanding the illusionary nature of *samsara*. It follows then that nirvana and *samsara* form two parts of the same whole. These parts could not exist separately from one another, nor could each exist merely as a conjunction of the individual parts. The two parts form a continuum that manifests more at one extreme than another, but never as only one extreme. This explains why Buddhism continually emphasizes the ever-present Buddha nature (potential for enlightenment or understanding truth) which exists not in opposition to non-enlightenment but in conjunction with it. Hence the self, necessarily exists in order for no-self to exits, albeit on different levels, but the two participate in the same whole. The explanation of why there is no-self comes from a level of ultimate reality while the necessity for self emerges on a conventional level. Ultimate reality refers to the five aggregates and the ideas that no self underlies them whatsoever, while conventional reality refers to linguistic designations which make it appear as if there is a corresponding reality which actually exists. Buddhists neither wholly reject nor wholly deny one reality over another, but acknowledge that both exist in human life. Both the acceptance of self and the rejection of self prove inextricable from the co-existing realities in which they occur.

The self which exists on a conventional level in such a way that various perceptions seem to reside in a stable abiding entity can be accounted for in Buddhist terms by inter-dependent arising of the five aggregates through causal connectivity. While some western philosophers and scholars like Hume can logically explain why the self does not exist, the Buddhist go beyond the theoretical to actually practice staying within the flow of experience. As James Giles points outs "self awareness can be called a secondary phenomenon, for the object of self awareness is not part of the basic fabric of experience."[6]. Still, no matter how much the illusion of the self becomes evident through various phenomenon like language and interdependent arising, the question of how exactly the idea of self emerges at all still remains unanswered.

In the west, we can answer how for the Buddhist the conventional self exists or asserts itself, but we can not answer how it exists. In the way that our consciousness as human beings has something to do with our sensory perceptions, and the content of our sensory perceptions presents itself to us through physiological systems, we might look at the brain for an answer. However, in spite of all the recent advancements in the fields of neuroscience and neuropsychology, especially in terms of brain functions, the question of how self -awareness or self-consciousness arises from the workings of physiological systems still needs to be answered. Neuroscientists and Buddhists alike have pointed out our mental capacities as given factors in our perceptions of the world without wholly explaining how those factors function as they do. We can certainly imagine the concept of self- changing according to perceptual content. As Hume argued that our sense of self comes from changing perceptions in a rapid succession so Katigiri explains that we conceive of and continuous and permanent abiding self and environment because of our misconceptions of time. To understand that "there is nothing for the mind to hold onto"[7] is to understand that the self by existing in impermanence does not exist. Here I can not help but ask; what mind? What does not exit?

[6] Jaems Giles, "Hume, Buddhism and Personal Identity." Philosophy East and West 43 (1993): 175-200.

[7] Dainin Katagiri. Each Moment is the Universe (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2007), 9.

Even though the details that constitute the self can be seen as impermanent and non-substantial the fundamental idea of self still persists.

The fact that the idea of the self must exit due to the nature of *samsara,* language, succession and perceptions does not satisfy the original question: How does one reconcile the apparent continuity and connectedness of personal existence with the idea that consciousness is reducible to transitory events? In coming full circle back to our question we may realize that our only solution is to accept our inability to know and to realize in our grasping for a specific answer we seek something outside the moment. Our grasping indicates the belief in a self capable of experiencing the satisfaction of knowing an answer. This seeking/grasping affirms our false belief in the illusion of self and demonstrates our lack of presence in the reality of impermanence

As a good westerner, all I can say is "forgive me my impermanence, forgive me my humanity." What the western mind has difficulty grasping is actually what Buddhist practice in being present to the fullness of the moment, not just understanding but experiencing our inter-dependence, our fluidity, our connection to what is. This is been most beneficial in so many areas in the west in helping overcoming the rigidity and adherence to substance and categorically thinking. The Buddhist teachings have helped the western mind to move beyond the dichotomized thought of being and non-being to a more holistic and organic understanding of the self and the world. It is no accident then that in the west that many disciplines and interdisciplinary movements have started shaping a new paradigm. One possible solution to our stuckness as emerged from both feminist perspectives and deep ecology.

One of the more meaningful points that has arisen from a feminist perspective and analysis of Buddhism has been the emphasis on interconnection. Given the anti-metaphysical nature of the Buddha's teachings on non-atman and non-attachment, one does find the insistence on the supremacy of the self with its accompanying social schisms of gender inequality and domination. As Anne Klein said: "This is partly because epistemology and ontology have become quite separate fields in the West, a rift which has been recently criticized by feminists. Buddhism tends to unite epistemological and ontological concerns in the process of developing categories of subjectivity. The individual is not framed *ex nihilo,* nor is it dispatched *ad nihilam,* but merges within a matrix in which it is viable and effective without exaggerated self-sufficiency."[8]

This would seem to suggest that incorporating the Buddhist ideals would provide a basis for eliminating western notions of supremacy and subjectivity. Indeed, many feminists have argued that Buddhism, because of its core teachings on independent co-arising with the understanding of the dynamic between ultimate and relative truth see this understanding of self as relationship, of interconnection as a way of healing and bridging many of the problems associated with our western understanding of individual autonomy within a social matrix. The feminist maintain that this cuts the debate regarding social constructions and notions of the self. In a truly Buddhist fashion the notion of interconnection and co-emergence is the middle way towards shaping a sense of identity and self in relation to the social world and the world of nature. The Buddhism in its teachings on emptiness, *sunyata,* empty all categories of relative difference. The Buddhist teachings would not therefore ultimately distinguish between self and other, culture and other, self and environment/ nature. For the Buddhist, I believe, what separates us is ultimately no separation.

[8] Rita Nakashima Brock, Paula Cooey and Anne Klein, "The Questions that Won't Go away: A Dialogue About Women in Buddhism and Christianity," Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*,* Fall 1990, 95.

The notion of interconnectedness shared by many western feminists in their analysis of Buddhism focuses on relation identity and interdependence of all existence. Ecological interconnections and inter/co-dependencies similarly form a philosophical foundation for the ecological and eco-feminists movements. Indeed contemporary environmental activists and eco-feminists around the world are proceeding along these lines precisely. In this way the feminist movement and environmental movements are themselves a synthesizing agent utilizing the Buddhist notion of interconnection to break through our western boundaries, notions of substantiality and destructive practices moving us from substantiality to sustainability.

Here the Buddhist doctrine of *anatman,* which denies the distinction between self and non-self underscores the oneness of the universe and provides us with an ethical principle for sustainability. According to the Buddhist principle of interconnection, diverse individual appearances and phenomena are all interconnected in the unity of existence. All beings, animal, plant, and minerals exists interdependently. Our interconnection with our environment ought to instill in us respect, humility, mindfulness and compassion. The Buddha taught that our attachment to the notion of a fixed, permanent substantial self prevents us from attaining spiritual liberation. This attachment illustrates the obstacles in our way for caring for the earth. By breaking out of the bonds of our illusory self we can become with the environment and mindful of our inter-being with all that exists.

The Dōgen Zenji´s 'Gakudō Yōjin-shū' from a Theravada Perspective

Ricardo Sasaki

Introduction

Zen principles and concepts are often taken as mystical statements or poetical observations left for its adepts to use his/her "intuitions" and experience in order to understand them. Zen itself is presented as a teaching beyond scriptures, mysterious, transmitted from heart to heart, and impermeable to logic and reason.

"*A special transmission outside the teachings, that does not rely on words and letters,*" is a well known statement attributed to its mythical founder, Bodhidharma. To know Zen one has to experience it directly, it is said. As Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright said, "*The image of Zen as rejecting all forms of ordinary language is reinforced by a wide variety of legendary anecdotes about Zen masters who teach in bizarre nonlinguistic ways, such as silence, "shouting and hitting," or other unusual behaviors. And when the masters do resort to language, they almost never use ordinary referential discourse. Instead they are thought to "point directly" to Zen awakening by paradoxical speech, nonsequiturs, or single words seemingly out of context. Moreover, a few Zen texts recount sacrilegious acts against the sacred canon itself, outrageous acts in which the Buddhist sutras are burned or ripped to shreds*." [1]

Western people from a whole generation eager to free themselves from the religion of their families have searched for a spiritual path in which, they hoped, action could be done without having to be explained by logic. Many have founded in Zen a teaching where they could act and think freely as Zen was supposed to be beyond logic and do not be present in the texts - a path fundamentally based on experience, intuition, and immediate feeling. Though all these kinds of strong statements have served to attract a great interest to Zen such affirmations, however, show only half of the truth of Zen.

As Andy Fergunson says, "*The current wide use of the word Zen notwithstanding, the corpus of Zen history and literature remains mostly unknown in the West (and, regretfully, in the East as well) even among advanced Zen students... Despite these wonderful works* [already published in the West]*, the surface of Zen history and teachings has barely been scratched*". [2] Not knowing very well the fundamental teachings, the common Zen practitioner ends up having a suffering and agonizing understanding of Zen.

Through this article I intend to present a few points to show to the Zen practitioner some of the resources his/her own tradition has to offer and from that to reunite him/her to the more ancient Indian Buddhist Canon. As the study of Zen in Zen centers are often limited to some works of a few of its main teachers, rarely involving a knowledge of any other scriptural resource, it is hoped

[1] Heine, Steven & Wright, Dale (Ed.). *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 24.

[2] Fergunson, Andy. *Zen´s Chinese Heritage*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000. p.1

that knowing how the ancient canon relates to its own Zen texts, will advance his understanding and practice.

Here I will limit myself to the classical Zen text called *Gakudō Yōjin-shū*, a Soto Zen text, [3] written by Dōgen Zenji, the Japanese patriarch of this school. Dōgen was born in 1200 and died in 1253. *Gakudō Yōjin-shū* means '*Guidelines for the practice of the Way*'. Dōgen wrote it after having written his *Fukanzazengui*, the basic Zen text. When one enters a Japanese Zen center, the *Fukanzazengui* is the first thing he/she gets. In roughly two pages Dōgen explains what meditation is and how to do it. Many Zen practitioners do not go beyond it.

The *Gakudō Yōjin-shū,* however, is a more mature work. It is where Dōgen will develop more deeply his orientations for the practice of the Way. There he takes ten points he considers essentials. It is not easy to write a condensed text. One is reminded when Achariya Buddhaghosa went to Sri Lanka aiming to translate the Pāli Canon. To prove his proficiency he was asked to comment a verse present in the Canon. So he wrote the *Visuddhimagga*, a compendium of the whole doctrine that in present edition has around 1000 pages in font size 8. Today, everyone ventures to translate suttas; in the past, however, one had to really prove that he/she was capable to do it! The *Visuddhimagga* is purported to be the summary of the teaching. So, Dōgen having summarized his teaching in roughly ten pages is a work of respect. We ought to investigate it.

I will be taking some of the points made by Dōgen in this work and study them from a canonical Theravada point of view. I will touch key points regarding meditation and Buddhist praxis as preserved in Theravada tradition, hoping that by doing so we can reveal that Dōgen and his work might be much nearer the Theravada exegesis than Zen practitioners often think.

Such a comparative work is useful for the understanding of Zen, in spite of the methods not being those usually employed in contemporaneous Zen centers. Such study of their own fundamental texts and a comparative investigation that links such texts to the more ancient ones ought to be useful. Such a comparative work is also useful to dilute preconceived ideas that Theravada students may have against the apparently abstruse mode that Zen employs in its transmission.

Before doing that, however, let us briefly see the history of origins that Zen tells of itself.

A Brief Genesis of Zen

> "*In these early years of its slow penetration, Buddhism did not influence the major social and intellectual movements we have described…Early Chinese princes and emperors who gave Buddhism limited patronage were persuaded for a time that this Buddha might be a divinity of sufficient power to be worth propitiating…The range of the early imperfect translations of Buddhist writings indicate that the few Chinese who became interested in the foreign religion were attracted by its novel formulas for the attainment of supernatural powers, immortality, or salvation and not by its ideas*."[4]

[3] Yokoi, Yūhō. *Zen Master Dōgen: An Introduction with Selected Writings*. New York: Weatherhill, 1984. pp.48-57.

[4] Wright, Arthur. *Buddhism in Chinese History*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959. p.32

During Buddhist history, many schools appeared and, just like a living organism, they have grown and developed their own characteristics. Each was born at a certain age and region. Each has absorbed into itself the cultural, regional, geographic, political, and social environment from where it was born and developed. Though originated from the same teachings of the Buddha, each had its specific characteristics distinguishing it from each other.

In the case of Zen, it is said it has appeared through the influence of an Indian monk known as Bodhidharma, who lived around the fifth or sixth century A.D. Having traveled from India to China, his teachings came to be known as the Way of Meditation (Ch'an in Chinese and Zen in Japanese). Though Bodhidharma was Indian, it was China the cradle of Zen.

It is said that there were two main tendencies in the kind of Buddhism present in China at this time when Bodhidharma arrived. One was mixed with the magical, full of mantras, instructions to obtain long life, fortune, happiness in this world, and so on, perhaps influenced by forms of Tantric teachings. It was a popular form of Buddhism, mystical, full of magic and 'esoteric' formulas. The other was a Buddhism studied merely as a philosophical subject, not perhaps so different as to how Buddhism is studied in our modern academic world. Confucionists, Taoists and New Buddhist scholars of Chinese descent, got together to debate, expound, and discuss that new foreign doctrine. They lacked, however, any interest in its practical aspects.

It is said that arriving from India, Bodhidharma realized that true Buddhism was not present there. There was only discussion on magical formulas, and speculative debates. What would Bodhidharma do? Perhaps because a basic characteristic of his lineage of Indian Buddhism was meditation, Bodhidharma set out to demonstrate this teaching practically: he sat and meditated. He went to a cave, and there he remained sit cross legged in front of its walls. The days and months went by, and people began to notice that ascetic in meditation. Full of curiosity, they approached him. What was he practicing? There he was, only sitting. Practicing meditation.

From Jhāna to Zen

The word for meditation in India is *jhāna*. *Jhāna* in Pāli, or *dhyāna* in Sanskrit. And as it happens with words that travel from one country to another, what was *jhāna* became *ch'an* to the Chinese ears. Some people started to follow the ascetic's teachings who sat in meditation, and so Ch'an Buddhism was born. Same story happened as Ch'an went to Korea, Japan, Vietnam. Ch'an became, respectively, Son, Zen and Thien. Really, same origins, the Indian *jhāna* or *dhyāna*. As the word Zen is better known in English language, so I use it in this article, but with the intention to embrace the whole tradition based on Ch'an, in spite of the differences among their many branches.

From this brief account it is possible to notice that a characteristic of modern Zen was already present in its beginnings: Bodhidharma faced a situation where he perceived a false or partial Buddhism. His action was to restore it to its original essence. The strategy used was to focus on meditation, lessening the importance of philosophical discussion, intellectual study and magical ceremonies. This was the mythical beginning of his school, which was to be developed within the Chinese environment, culturally and spiritually very different from the Indian environment. Zen will take a typical Chinese color: a care for nature, a Confucionist's doctrine on social duties

and obligations, a Taoist union between art and aesthetical observation of nature, the Confucionist importance of action, and so on.

As Zen advanced to Korea, Japan and Vietnam other typical elements from those cultures were added. The same occurred to Theravada as it entered in Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The same to Vajrāyāna as it entered in Tibet or Japan. The same is occurring now as the various Buddhist Schools enter the West.

Zen's self image

> "*At this stage the pupil will not repeat the old mistakes when meditating. He does not look now for any rational solution, having learned by his previous failures that thinking is totally useless and must be eliminated*." [5]

As with other schools, Zen has carved its own self-image, a way that Zen itself, or its practitioners, like to think about themselves. Independent of the countries where they developed, all the various Zen schools kept such self-image. It ought to be considered an essentially meditative school, where study has a minimal place. Its transmission and understanding of Dharma comes, as the Japanese sentence "*i shin den shin*" (以心伝心) says, from heart to heart, or from mind to mind. The master transmits its essence to the chosen disciples. It does not depend of any study or scriptural knowledge. It not only emphasizes the importance of meditation, but also a basic mistrust in all rational discourse, perhaps a heritage of that first encounter of Bodhidharma with the scholars in China.

Changing Words

Within a religion or a school of thought, there are many phases of development. It means that depending of the time of its history we look at, a school or religion favors a specific vocabulary. In Hinduism today, for example, we can see the importance of the Trimurti (Brahma, Viśnu and Śiva). Mainly Viśnu and Śiva are important gods in the Hindu day to day life. We see their statues and paintings everywhere when we visit India. One of Viśnu's manifestations is Kṛśna, a central figure of the famous Bhagavad Gita. However, the situation was not like this since the beginning. There was a time in Hinduism where the Trimurti had no importance and its main gods had different names.

We do not have a so different experience in the West. The Christianity of our parents and grandparents was different from ours. The religion we learned 30 years ago was quite different from the present Christianity. Today it uses a new vocabulary and mode of expression that would be unimaginable years ago. Base communities, liberation theology, electronic-Churches, new lay movements, all of it is totally different from the Renaissance Christianity, in its turn different from the Mediaeval Christianity, and even more regarding the Patristic Period. Not only vocabulary is different, but the same words are used in a different way.

[5] Herrigel, Eugen. *The Method of Zen*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1960. p.55

In Buddhism it is no different. Words like Nirvāṇa, Buddha, Bodhisattva, Arahant, etc, do not have the meaning in all schools. And not only in Zen but in all Mahāyāna schools, a word has acquired an impressive place throughout its history, an importance unforeseen in regard to Early Buddhism. This phenomenon is common in the history of religions.

The Main Issue: Bodhicitta

In time, a word that had no presence in the early canonical teaching of Buddhism, has acquired in the Mahāyāna schools a very great importance that has persisted till today. Such word is *Bodhicitta*, usually translated as Enlightenment Mind or Awakening of the Heart.

In Tibetan schools, Bodhicitta is everything that the practitioner hears about in his/her first twenty or thirty years of practice. It is the word that gathers all the motivation the practitioner should have to engage on the Path. "*Develop the Enlightenment Mind!,*" it is what one hears constantly. Bodhicitta is what one should develop in order to become a Buddha. Treatises, expositions, talks and trainings are given around the world with the single task to develop Bodhicitta. All Buddhas of the past have developed it and we too must do it. More we learn about Bodhicitta, more we realize that it encompasses absolutely everything in Buddhism.

The Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism [6] has a three-page definition of it. It is the spirit of Buddhism, the aspiration to achieve it, the determination to achieve Buddhahood, the aspiration to rescue all beings, the aim to transcend the cycle of Birth and Death, the wish to enter the evil world to rescue sentient beings, to neglect its cultivation is the action of demons, it is the crucial step in all Mahāyāna schools, the Supreme Mind of all Buddhas, the mind that gathers in all beings and helps them achieve rebirth in the Pure Land, the condition to enter the Pure Land.

As one can see, Bodhicitta is so much everything that one incurs the risk of not really knowing what it means in the end. It is to love our neighbor, it is to meditate, it is to develop the four divine states, to cultivate all virtues and paramittas, to realize the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths. Bodhicitta is to do everything in terms of practice, in order to reach Buddhahood.

Dōgen started his work saying that the "*Bodhi-mind is known by many names; but they all refer to the One Mind of the Buddha*". We should pay attention to it, "*Bodhicitta is known by many names*". It is in this way we must understand: it has many names. very important first sentence!

It also means that it might be possible to look at a Zen text not from the point of view that Zen practitioners look at it every day, as something mystical or poetical, but, should we say, from a canonical way, more specifically in accordance with the early teachings of the Buddha as expressed, among other ways, by the Pāli recension of it.

Though Bodhicitta throughout the centuries came to be associated with every single practice and teaching in Buddhism, we can ask what the word truly meant by those who first used it? We do not want the developed meaning, the meaning that was inflated, expanded, till the word became a superword, a word that desiring to mean everything became so full of added meanings that ended up meaning nothing.

6 *Seeker´s Glossary of Buddhism*. New York: Sutra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada. p. 63

Bodhi mind is the mind of the Buddha. It is an Awakened Mind. And it has many names. It means then that it can be present in other schools under other names. What originally Bodhicitta pointed to, its signifier, might have been referred not only as 'Bodhicitta' but by other names. Will our reading of Dōgen support this interpretation?

Bodhicitta refers to a kind of awakened mind, a special mind that the Buddha has. Bodhi Mind is known by many names. Saying this, Dōgen started his work explaining that his intention is to talk about the most important subject at his time, Bodhicitta. To do that he brings the authority of no less than Nāgārjuna, the assumed great master of the Mahāyāna movement. And what Nāgārjuna has to say about Bodhicitta is so refreshing, that if all Buddhist schools kept his words in mind much of the confusions between various schools regarding Bodhicitta would disappear. As long as we do not understand properly the Bodhi Mind we have confused ideas about it. We may think it means different things to different people. We may think that some schools have it and others not. If we include, as many do, in the word 'Bodhicitta' each and every good meaning and practice in Buddhism, we start to think that Bodhicitta is something special and mysterious. Doing so becomes a problem!

If today one says Bodhicitta is restraint and sacrifice, the importance of looking at the needs of the other and helping them; and then tomorrow one says Bodhicitta is the development of equanimity, the need to develop an even mind; and then the next day one says that Bodhicitta is the reunion of samatha and vipassana and the synthesis of all meditation practices; and yet in another day one says it embodies the Noble Eightfold Path, the accomplishment of the Four Noble Truths, and so on, then Bodhicitta becomes everything, and being everything it is really nothing. You do not know what it really is or how to practice it. And as traditions, like Theravāda, do not speak of Bodhicitta, the impression that remains is that Theravāda has not that 'special thing'. You look at the Suttas, and where is Bodhicitta? No mention of it! Inferior school!

What however would happen if we could understand Bodhicitta in a single instant? Really understand it? We would not need to create a mystical word, a bubble word full of meanings. No need of poetry, just the straight and hard true meaning of it that could pierce and explode that bubble. We would need a master to save us from the poetry of entanglement. It is why Dōgen started his *Gakudō Yōjin-shū* ("Guidelines for studying the Way") quoting Nāgārjuna.

"*The mind that sees into the flux of arising and decaying and recognizes the transient nature of the world is also known as the Bodhi-mind,*" said Nāgārjuna. Dōgen Zenji, the great master of Japanese Zen, quotes Nāgārjuna to explain that Bodhicitta is nothing more nothing less than fully seeing the transient nature of the world, its flux of arising and passing away.

It is worthwhile to call the Theravāda practitioners to read this as that is what the Buddha and the Pāli Canon state from beginning to end! Anicca! See anicca, look at anicca, understand anicca, realize and penetrate anicca. This is the aim of the Noble Path, this is what you understand in the Four Noble Truths, this is why you practice the virtues, this is what you see when practicing Vipassana. All of these is the Mind of Enlightenment. It is Bodhicitta. When you see the flux of arising and decaying, there you have Bodhicita in front of you. One should not feel less or inferior because your texts do not mention the word 'Bodhicitta'! It is on the major authority of Nāgārjuna, considered the father of Mahāyāna and patriarch of all Mahāyāna schools, with the support of Dōgen Zenji, the founder of Japanese Soto Zen, that Bodhicitta is explained as what it exists from beginning to end in the Pāli Canon. It is what Theravāda practitioners study from the very first day!

Yāso and Lābho

Dōgen continues his explanation of Bodhicitta in the following way, "*Why, then, is temporary dependence on this mind called the Bodhi-mind? When the transient nature of the world is recognized, the ordinary selfish mind does not arise; neither does the mind that seeks fame and profit*."

Bodhicitta, this kind of mind that observes, penetrates and understands impermanence, the rising and passing away of all things, has the power to dissolve the sense of "I". We can see its similitude to the series of insights described in the Pāli Canon and commentaries regarding anicca. This 'seeing through' is not just a seeing of the impermanence in nature, but primarily of our inner nature. [7] When the egotistical selfish mind does not arise, also the mind that looks for fame and profit does not come. So the direct seeing of anicca is intimately connected to the non-arising of the selfish mind. In other words, the common selfish mind only arises when there is no true seeing of anicca. Without its seeing we perceive things as permanent entities. It is what is called wrong view, seeing things in a deluded way. It is from seeing in a deluded way that selfishness comes from. It is the function of selfishness to concoct the ordinary mind. It is not in dependence of Bodhicitta as a vague entity that one gets free from the ordinary selfish mind, but as a direct seeing of anicca, the true meaning of Bodhicitta.

As the practitioner reminds him/herself constantly of the transiency of all things and people, there is no room for the arising of selfishness and then fame and profit are not looked for. Here it comes immediately to the mind of a Theravāda practitioner the teaching on the *lokadhammas*. Lokadhammas are the eight things explained by the Buddha as things that men pursue in life and also as things that pursue all men, as long they live in this world.[8] The first pair is pain (*dukkha*) and pleasure (*sukha*). As long as we live in this world they will be present. We will feel pain and become sick. It is part of the human experience. We search for pleasure and want to avoid pain. We are trapped by this pair. The second pair is to be criticized (*nindā*) and to be praised (*pasamsā*). We do not want the first and are eager for the second. It also means that independent of what we do in life, criticism and praise will be present. It is impossible to please all and avoid that some people will not like us. Hitler and Buddha, both had their critics and admirers. Third pair is fame (*yāso*) and being deprived of any favors (*ayāso*). We wish that our name is known and our efforts acknowledged. We do not want to be forgotten. Finally there is profit (*lābho*) and loss (*alābho*). It does not matter what we do, some gain and some loss will happen.Fame and profit for Dōgen here seems to be just a summary of all the lokadhammas. He took two out of eight just for demonstration. A mind that sees impermanence does not go crazy for the lokadhammas. It sees clearly all things as transient.

"*A monk who clearly sees six benefits should set up without limits the perception of impermanence in relation to all formations. These six are:*

1. *'All formations will appear to me as unstable.'*
2. *'My mind will not take delight in all three worlds.'*

[7] "*The contemplation of impermanence is the repeated observation of the impermanence of the five aggregates comprehended through the meditation itself.*" Ñāṇārāma Mahātera. *The Seven Contemplations of Insight*. Kandy: BPS, 1997. p.20

[8] *Atthime bhikkhave lokadhammā lokam anupari vuttanti; lokosa ime attha lokadhamme anu pari vuttati.* "*Bhikkhus, the eight manifestations of lokadhamma are always following all the sattavas, otherwise called loka, and all the sattavas or the loka are also following lokadhamma*". Mahasi Sayadaw. *A Discourse on Lokadhamma*. Yangon: Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization, 2000. p.5

3. *'My mind will emerge from all the three worlds.'*
4. *'My mind will be oriented towards Nibbāna.'*
5. *'The fetters will be abandoned by me.'*
6. *'I will be endowed with supreme recluseship.''*[9]

Head in flames

For Dōgen, once someone is "*Aware that time waits for no man, [he/she should] train as though you were attempting to save your head from being enveloped in flames*." One is of course immediately reminded of the Fire Sermon of the Pāli Canon that goes at lengths to show that the whole world is in flames and that liberation means to subdue this fire. As Thanissaro Bhikkhu puts it, "*The best-known metaphor for the goal is the name nibbāna (nirvāṇa), which means the extinguishing of a fire*." [10] However, there is a much more striking borrowing by Dōgen as he is almost repeating in fact a passage from the *Maranassati Sutta* (AN.vi.20) that says, "*Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, undivided mindfulness, and alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, undivided mindfulness, and alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities*."

The Buddha raises his foot

Dōgen follows advising that, "*Reflecting on the transient nature of body and life, exert yourself just as the Buddha Śākyamuni did when he raised his foot.*" Those reading this passage without any context can become very confused. In what occasion did the Buddha raise his foot? Happily the commentary refers this passage to a story when the then Bodhisatta met a previous Buddha, called Phussa (Puṣya in Skr.), and, to demonstrate his determination to achieve Enlightenment in the future, kept his foot raised for seven days and nights. Phussa is mentioned in the Pāli Canon (*Buddhavaṁsa*) as the eighteenth of the twenty four Buddhas. [11]

A Kinnara God

There is a recommendation that Dōgen gives that pretty much sounds poetical, but that can mean more than it seems. "*Although you hear the flattering call of the god Kiṁnara and the kalavinka bird, pay no heed, regarding them as merely the evening breeze blowing in your ears. Even though you see a face as beautiful as that of Mao-ch'ang or Hsi-shih, think of them as merely the morning dew blocking your vision. When freed from the bondage of sound, color, and shape, you will naturally become one with true Bodhi-mind*".

[9] AN.iii.443.

[10] Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *The Mind Like Fire Unbound: An Image in the Early Buddhist Discourses*. http://here-and-now.org/wwwArticles/nibbana2.html

[11] Malalasekera, G. P. *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1995. *The Pali-English Dictionary* by T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede gives *phussa* as deriving from '*puṣ',* to blossom, nourish, and related to the Vedic *puṣya*.

The Kiṁnara god (緊那羅) is a class of bird-like celestial being with a man's head, acting as musician. These mythological beings are well known in Theravāda countries, where they and their consorts, the kinnari, appear frequently in sculpture, dance, and paintings. They are often represented standing in front of temples in Thailand. Of the past lives of the Buddha, four were depicted as kinnara. Of the hundred and eight symbols on the footprint of Buddha, the kinnari is one of them. As celestial musicians they symbolized the highest kind of beauty in sound. Dōgen takes these celestial musicians and the kalavinka birds (another kind of beings present in many sūtras and known for singing beautifully[12]) to give the practical teaching: even if you hear the best of the sounds, do not pay attention and grab it.

One is reminded about the Odysseus's tale, in the Western tradition, and the temptation of Sirens: '"*Come this way, honored Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans, and stay your ship, so that you can listen here to our singing; for no one else has ever sailed past this place in his black ship until he has listened to the honey-sweet voice that issues from our lips; then goes on, well-pleased, knowing more than ever he did; for we know everything that the Argives and Trojans did and suffered in wide Troy through the gods' despite. Over all the generous earth we know everything that happens." So they sang, in sweet utterance, and the heart within me desired to listen, and I signaled my companions to set me free, nodding with my brows, but they leaned on and rowed hard, and Perimedes and Eurylochos, rising up, straightway fastened me with even more lashings and squeezed me together.*'[13] Curiously, Sirens are depicted as having "*girls' faces but birds' feet and feathers.*" Deprived of their wings because they lost a musical contest to the Muses, they now sit and sing "*among the heaped bones of sailors whom they had drawn to their deaths*." [14]

If you listen to the Siren unmindfully (without the proper safeguards) you get dragged to the bottom of the sea and die, that is the message. So Dōgen advises to "*pay no heed, regarding them as merely the evening breeze blowing in your ears*." He also advises the same behavior one should have if seeing "*a face as beautiful as that of Mao-ch'ang or Hsi-shih,"* who were thought to be beautiful courtesans of ancient China. Dōgen concludes, "*When freed from the bondage of sound, color, and shape, you will naturally become one with true Bodhi-mind.*" How one grounded in the earlier suttas would consider this enigmatic and poetical statement? What bondage to sounds, color and shape has to do with Bodhicitta?

Reading it from a Theravāda perspective it seems clear this teaching refers to the doctrine of *saḷāyatanas*, the six sense bases, and its role on the path to enlightenment. Dōgen mentions sound, color and shape, but it could be well extended to other sense objects as well. We could easily understand the sentence as "*freed from the bondage of sound, color, shape* [color and shape constitute the characteristics of visual objects]*, taste, smell, touch and mental impressions*". In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (DN.ii.289-315), the sense bases are included as meditation objects during the step of *dhammānupassanā* (contemplation of dhammas). According to the paṭiccasamuppāda teaching, the saḷāyatanas are the basis that contact (*phassa*) and feeling (*vedanā*) use as support. From vedanā, the whole process of dukkha formation can take place as

---

[12] Cf. this passage of the Lotus Sutra, "*Sage lord, heavenly being among heavenly beings, voiced like the kalavinka bird, you who pity and comfort living beings, we now pay you honor and reverence*." (Chapter VII ~ 'Parable of the Phantom City'.)

[13] *Odyssey*. Richmond Lattimore's translation: Book:12 - Line: 184-196.

[14] Graves, R. *The Greek Myths*. London: The Folio Society, 2000. Vol. II, p. 653

craving (*taṇhā*), attachment (*upadāna*), becoming (*bhava*), birth (*jāti*) and the mass of suffering (*dukkha*), develops.[15]

The whole idea of Dependent Origination is that once mentality-materiality (*nāmarūpa*) is there, it becomes a basis for the birth of sense bases (*nāmarūpa paccaya saḷāyatana*). Nāma here is name or mentality and signifies the aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and mental concoctions (*sankhāra*). Rūpa is usually translated as form or body, and signifies the Great Essential Elements (*mahābhūta: earth, water, fire, and air*) and the Derived Matter.[16] Nāmarūpa being, saḷāyatana is. The six āyatanas or sense bases are further divided in internal (doors) and external (objects of consciousness).[17] The six āyatanas being, contact (*phassa*) is made possible. Contact (eye contact, ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact, mind element contact, mind-consciousness-element contact), then is explained as the contact of three elements: the sense door, the sense object and the sense consciousness. All three are necessary to exist at a given moment to produce what the Buddha calls contact (*phassa*).

From contact comes feeling (*vedanā*), that can be of three sorts: pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. As it can take as basis any of the six senses the result is that we can have twelve different kinds of feelings. Up to this link there is no problem. But because usually we are influenced by ignorance, the whole process of contact and feeling is ignorant too, meaning that it will serve as a basis for the birth of craving (*taṇhā*) and attachment (*upadāna*). Craving and attachment becomes then the condition for the notion of "I" to develop, that will fully grown to a substantial, existent, solid subject that experiences pleasure, pain, craving, suffering and eventually death.

By this explanation of Dependent Origination it is clear to what Dōgen is aiming when saying, "*When freed from the bondage of sound, color, and shape, you will naturally become one with true Bodhi-mind.*" To free ourselves from the bondages born from the ignorant contact between sense bases and sense objects, is to cut craving and ignorance with one single blow. Being mindfull to contact as just contact and feeling as just feeling, we stop the formation of the next links. We become one with true Bodhi-mind. And what is a true Bodhi-mind? It is that mind that sees deeply and directly impermanence, as we have seen above. Seeing all things in constant flux, this mind does not solidify either subject or object. As Ñanarama Mahathera says, "*This constant passing away of whatever rises shows that impermanence is an intrinsic fact of life, one which cannot be separated from the five aggregates that make up your very being. The ignorant worldling who fails to grasp this truth regards his own personal five aggregates as well as external objects as permanent. Accordingly, all his mental, verbal, and physical actions will be based on erroneous assumptions*."[18] We can see that there is nothing esoteric or poetical regarding becoming "one" with the Mind of Enlightenment (*bodhicitta*). It is the purest description of Dependent Origination in action. What Dōgen is saying is, do not let *phassa* become cravings, desires, clinging. You will then be free, all the time, to see impermanence. Your mind will be an enlightened mind where attachment cannot get hold of. Therefore you will not suffer; you will not have deluded desires for anything. In one single sentence Dōgen tells the whole story of Dependent Origination.

---

[15] "*The ring-leader, the trouble maker, is feeling. And we all already know well what feeling is, it arises constantly. But if you want to know it in greater details just go back along the series of Dependent Origination… Simply eliminate ignorance and none of the rest will arise. There will be no suffering.*" Buddhadasa, Bhikkhu. *Paticcasamuppada: Dependent Origination*. Bangkok: The Foundation of Sublime Life, 1986. p.47.

[16] Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Ed.). *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Kandy: BPS, 1993. p. 235.

[17] Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Ed.). *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Kandy: BPS, 1993. p. 286.

[18] Ñanarama Mahathera. *The Seven Contemplations of Insight*. Kandy: BPS, 1997. p.16

Partial Conclusion

Throughout this article we could see that when we study a Zen text without assuming Zen's lack of emphasis in the mind's analytical process and in the importance of study, we are able to see it in a way quite different from what a common Zen practitioner would see it. Instead of poetical, mysterious, full of riddles and paradoxes, one is able to see in its literature something nearer to the Ancient Indian Canon. The text is able to reveal another side that was hidden by the constraints of tradition. Such a comparative approach can be immensely valuable not only to the scholar interested in the history of different schools, but mainly to practitioners of both traditions that can have a stronger basis to understand each other, let aside their preconceptions, and collaborate towards a common aim.

This article is only part of an ongoing study comparing Theravāda and Canonical Literature with other Buddhist traditions. I hope that it is able to give a glimpse of how valuable it is to have a comparative approach when studying a particular tradition within Buddhism.

Cultivating Concord through Inter-Viewing: A New Method for Inter-Lineage Contact

Peter G. Grossenbacher[1], Kelly A. Graves[2], Daphne M. Davis[3]

1. Introduction

Drawing from central Buddhist teachings, this paper presents a new methodology for enhancing unity among distinct Buddhist lineages. Rather than advocating for a fusion of Buddhist schools into one amalgam, our aim is to facilitate harmonious interaction between practitioners of disparate lineages to foster mutual understanding that enables the identification of areas common across their respective philosophies and praxes. We thus delineate a path for unification through cultivating concord between the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana schools.

1.1 21st Century Buddhism in the West

In an increasingly globalized world where factors such as internet, telephones and airplanes, where geographic distance are now easier to traverse in shorter times, contact with alternate worldviews is at an all time high. Although globalization may be seen as a factor that pollutes historical tradition, it also has potential for facilitating widely shared experience, and increasing understanding of Buddhist traditions outside a practitioner's primary affiliation. Intergroup contact theory delineates several ways in which appropriate forms of engaging people outside one's own social group fosters heartfelt connection with people different from oneself. Fellow members of one's sangha provide a helpful mirror for a person's behavior and manifestation in regards to the noble eight-fold path. Extending this to the larger maha-sangha of all Buddhist practitioners lends greater perspective to this essential feedback function.

Although all lineages share a common origin in northern India, distinct Buddhist traditions have diverged from each other as philosophy and praxis have migrated to new lands and faced the challenges of cultural and linguistic translation. In the millennia before the invention of mechanized means of long-distance travel, local traditions were easily maintained in relative isolation from one another, which resulted in relatively slow cultural exchange between far-flung groups. (This does not suggest that in earlier times there was no cultural exchange or that practices never varied due to contact with different groups, simply that these processes were much more limited than they are today.)

[1] Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado USA
[2] Sri Lanka
[3] Trauma Center, Justice Resource Institute, Brookline, MA USA

As counter-balance to this growing divergence, however, movements such as Tian Tai in China and Rime in Tibet have demonstrated possible approaches toward unification among some lineages. Within the last century, increasing availability of intercontinental transportation has accelerated the geographic distribution of Buddhism. Many parts of the globe that were not previously home to the Buddhadharma have been receiving immigrant practitioners and teachers from a growing variety of distinct Buddhist traditions. For example, scores of distinct lineages have converged in the West, each attracting thousands of disciples and developing multigenerational sanghas. As there is no native tradition of Buddhism extant in North America, all lineages of Buddhism have been transplanting into the United States for only a small number of generations. This close geographical proximity and overlap has yielded increasing opportunity for contact between traditions. In this new scenario, distinct lineages are encountering each other in a growing number of countries, affording the opportunity for one Buddhist lineage to interact extensively with one or more other Buddhist lineages (in addition to non-Buddhist traditions). In the USA, the three schools are geographically overlapping and coextensive. It is common for any major city to have communities in each school, and for there to be direct contact between different sanghas. Regardless of whatever cultural peculiarities may arise from western students, this scenario offers a case study for possible unification of philosophical traditions in a multi-tradition community.

Assimilating to the host culture only to a certain degree, immigrant communities may maintain cultural practices in a more distilled way than sanghas comprised mostly of converts to Buddhism. Immigrant sanghas may preserve a particular Buddhist tradition in language and other ways that may become transformed among people who have converted to Buddhism. Interaction between these immigrant and convert communities offers a catalyst for cultural exchange.

In this study three American Buddhists were interviewed by a Buddhist from a different lineage. Strikingly, all three of the interviewees had not only practiced outside of their current lineage, but also taught in lineages other than their current one. This echoes the current cultural exchange afforded by globalization and provides ripe ground for fostering a more empathetic approach to pan-sangha interaction.

1.2 Allport's Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

Advances in psychological research may provide one strategy for fostering a scientific glimpse into why interaction among disparate belief systems and cultures may foster concord among different Buddhist views. In 1954, Gordon W. Allport discovered that under appropriate conditions, interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice between members of two groups in conflict. His research has since been replicated and built upon, and is now known in psychology as the Intergroup Contact Theory. The Intergroup Contact Theory proposes that mere exposure or interaction with other ethnicities or groups reduces prejudice and cultivates empathy and care for another.

The reduction of prejudice through intergroup contact is based on a reconceptualization of group categories. Gordon Allport (1954) asserted that prejudice is a direct result of generalizations and over-simplifications that a person makes about an entire group of people, based on a misunderstanding of another person's view. Rothbart and John (1985) describe this change of view as "an example of the general cognitive process by which attributes of category members

modify category attributes." Or in other words, an individual's view of a group can be modified by the person coming into contact with a member of that group who subsequently enables them to modify or elaborate their beliefs about the group as a whole. Intergroup Contact Theory is a testament to the power of direct experience that fosters increased and accurate awareness of reality - a process similarly supported by many Buddhist traditions.

In order for the fruits of intergroup contact to occur, however, four criteria must be met: both groups must enter into an equal status relationship; both groups must work on a mutual project and share this as a common goal; there must be opportunity for group members to get to know each other as friends; and an authority that both groups acknowledge must support the interactive contact between groups and members. Although forms of intergroup contact occur naturally, especially given circumstances afforded by globalization, it is difficult to fulfill all of these criteria.

This study seeks to provide an additional venue for intergroup contact through a new interview method that brings together Buddhists from different lineages and encourages dialogue about the Dhamma by virtue of their respective traditions. Direct experience and interpersonal interaction within a supportive environment may lay the grounds for more compassionate understanding of other Buddhist views.

1.3 Aims of this Paper

The subsequent sections of this paper establish a new method for fostering contact between Buddhist lineages, examine views held by particular Buddhist teachers, advance a theoretical perspective on Buddhist philosophy, and suggest educational applications of this work for university students. The novel method ("inter-viewing") involves the interviewing of a Buddhist teacher about philosophy and praxis, and the next section reports on such a study in which one teacher from each of the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana schools was interviewed. The reported empirical results focus on these teachers' views, including their understanding of the relationship between right view and meditative realization. These results inform an empirically derived theoretical treatment of view and praxis, which is presented next. Finally, implications for educational application suggest course assignments that directly involve university students in using this interview method in order to afford new opportunities for unification among distinct Buddhist schools.

2. Method

2.1 Interviewers

The first and third author of this paper served as Interviewers. Both are Westerners, meditation teachers, and students in meditation lineages. They included one female instructor in the Taoist Pothiyalai tradition who also practiced Vipassana from the Mahayana school, and one male instructor in the Buddhist Rime tradition (with lineages in Kagyu, Nyingma, and Shambhala). As such, the process of the interviewers interviewing meditation teachers exemplified the novel "inter-viewing" method in action, since each interviewer interviewed a meditation instructor from a school outside of their personal tradition.

2.2 Participating Teachers

Three American meditation teachers in Boulder, Colorado agreed to be interviewed when so invited by the research team. These teachers were selected based on their long-standing reputation in the Boulder area as accomplished meditation teachers. The identity of each participant is kept confidential because the interview was conducted as part of a research protocol, and each teacher is designated in this report by the capital letter "T" (for Teacher) followed by a number (1, 2, or 3). T1 is a male teacher from a Vipassana (Theravada) tradition, T2 is a male teacher from a Zen (Mahayana) tradition, and T3 is a female teacher from the Kagyu Nyingma (Vajrayana) tradition. All three have had decades of teaching experience, teaching individuals and groups in urban meditation centers as well as rural retreat centers. T1 and T3 have taught meditation at Naropa University, and they have also taught meditation to their clients in psychotherapy practice. T1 and T3 have used media such as CDs and books to teach meditation, with T1 also utilizing the telephone and e-mail for teaching meditation.

2.3 Interview Instrument

Meditation teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured instrument that specifically addressed varying aspects of meditation instruction including preparation, instruction context, assessment, the purpose of meditation, non-duality, non-conceptuality, and so on. The instrument was designed by the two interviewers based on preliminary data garnered from a focus group of undergraduate students that elicited discussion of information they would like to know about their meditation instructors, and from interviewers' personal experiences as recipients of meditation instruction and as meditation teachers. To test the instrument and train interviewers, the instrument was piloted during two interviews with colleagues of the authors.

2.4 Procedure

Each interview session started with introductions and a few minutes of informal conversation so that everyone could feel comfortable. The interview itself began with this statement made by the interviewer "Our intention is to gain greater understanding of meditation instruction." Meditation teachers consented that their in-person interviews be audio-recorded and were informed that their identity would remain confidential. Teachers were informed that interviewers themselves were meditation teachers in order to convey that the interviewers had a suitable context for understanding of meditation instruction and meditation. A contemplative approach was utilized in conducting interviews, which involved an observer (a second member of the interview team, also a meditation instructor) mindfully holding the space for and being present in the interview. As the interview was being conducted with this contemplative approach, we noticed a personal process of deep reflection evident in each person. At times, interviewers asked follow-up questions and asked interviewees to give examples. The teachers themselves appeared to appreciate the thoughtful questions, the experience of being interviewed in this manner, and their own process of responding to interview questions. At the end of the interview, teachers were given the opportunity to comment on the interview process, procedure, and so on. Interviews lasted approximately one hour, were audio-recorded, and subsequently transcribed. The resulting verbal data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic content analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Multiple Training Lineages

Each teacher has trained in more than one lineage. T1 told us "My own teachers have been important models for me. Satchidananda, Trungpa Rinpoche, Trumpa Rinpoche, Kali Rinpoche, Dujan Rinpoche, Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzburg, Joseph Goldstein. My current teacher is a woman named Yvonne Rand, she's been pretty helpful. Rebbe Zalman, who I worked with very closely for about 5 years. Father Thomas Keating was a teacher I studied centering prayer with. Ram Daas. I worked with 2 of his organizations. I feel like I've had incredible good fortune and many blessings to have access to these kinds of teachers." T2 mentioned his teachers have included "Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche and Eido Roshi", a Tibetan Vajra Master as well as Zen Priest. T3 started her training with Transcendental Meditation, before proceeding into extended training in Kagyu and Nyingma schools of Tibetan Buddhism. In addition to her Buddhist training, T3 credits "Being a therapist has… been helpful for me to be able to read people… particularly, body-based therapeutic training – Hakomi."

3.2 Multiple Teaching Lineages

T1 currently teaches Vipassana, but has taught "Primarily Vipassana meditation of the Theravada tradition. I also teach some Shamatha-Vipassana as taught through the Shambhala system. I have also taught various forms of guided meditation that I have used with relaxation processes for clients who have anxiety issues. I have also taught some centering prayer in the Christian tradition. I taught meditation in the yogic tradition." T1 has taught in many distinct settings associated with a variety of traditions: "I first started teaching when I was living in Nepal in the 1986-1989 period. And I taught at a Tibetan Center called the Himalayan Yogic Institute that was associated with a teacher named Rama Yeshi. More currently, Rama Zota. And that's an international system of Vajrayana centers that are located in 50 some centers around the world. So originally I taught at their city center. They had a country retreat center and a city center in Katmandu where I was living. And I taught - I actually taught insight meditation in the Theravada flavor, tradition, but I had a relationship with the people who ran the center and they invited me to teach weekends there. … I taught in the Contemplative Psychology Masters degree program [at Naropa University] in 90-91. … Eventually ending up at the Unitarian Church where the group still goes on and where I teach it on Tuesday nights." In addition, "I include a certain amount of transpersonal psychology at times if I think it's relevant to the Western students, and I make a particular effort when I give instructions on practice to be as clear as possible, so that the instructions that are transmitted are really clear to people."

T1 presents something of a paradox with regard to tradition and innovation: "I have tremendous respect for the form that I've studied and practiced and that I teach. And I also have tremendous respect for people that taught me this particular method. And so, I have a strong commitment to the vision of the practice and its capacity to liberate people from their suffering and to love to real happiness and fulfillment. So, I have a strong commitment on one level to the integrity of the form, and at the same time, I trust myself as well in terms of the fact that my own background includes a lot of comparative religious study, and so I'm quite willing to draw upon that when I think it's appropriate. And, generally, I think that enhances my teaching. It's both

and I don't feel restricted, generally speaking, by the form or the method when I'm adhering to it." Yet T1 maintains fidelity to the particular technique that he teaches, as evidenced by this statement: "And I'll listen to see if what they're doing is what the instruction really is, or if they are blending it with 3 other things they read in different books or got from different traditions or teachers, or if they're making up their own practice…"

In contrast, T2 has restricted his teaching to zazen only. However, he has instructed students "from a variety of backgrounds - Vipassana, Tantric meditation, Zen." With regard to his authorization to teach: "Actual teaching doesn't happen until after the Dharma Transmission from the teacher. So that what is being taught is not your understanding, but the lineage's understanding complete." T2 also pointed out that "There are 700 Lutheran ministers in Germany ordained in zazen practice. The Benedictines in Snowmass practice zazen. Thomas Merton - I was just there - his monastery, and they practice zazen. "

T3 has taught in both Kagyu and Nyingma traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, Shambhala, and "as a therapist, sometimes what I do is I use meditation as a way for us to together drop down, and I'll do a guided meditation so that they can learn how to do this for themselves".

3.3 Assessing Students

Results indicated similarities among meditation teachers with regards to the means by which they assess meditation students. When discussing ways in which they assess students' development, all three teachers mentioned students' increased awareness, including an increased awareness of awareness, and their ability to talk about their meditation. While two teachers (T1, T2) mentioned that longevity (e.g., years) of regular practice factors into assessing students, all three teachers discussed using the ways in which students describe the quality of their meditation practice as means of assessment. T1 and T3 indicated that with more advanced students, their instructions became less directive than with intermediate or beginner meditation students. Measures of development included students' ability to deeply understand the "basic principles of the practice" (T1) and to understand their directions clearly. T1 noted: "As people progress and develop in practice, I start encouraging them to trust their own intuitive inner guidance more and to develop that sense of that capacity of inner guidance that [is such an] integral a part of the mature practice".

Teachers also described unique assessment methods. T3 utilized student's kindness, acceptance and humor as measures of students' development. A practical way that this could be assessed is, as T3 suggested, by observing a meditation student being willing to work with and accept their anxiety and resistance. For example, T3 described one of his student's progress as having "got real experience and an enormous amount of confidence by letting herself be with the worst kind of anxiety."

T2 utilized the content of what a student is working with in meditation to determine the student's stage of development. For example, a student whose mind is being pulled by every thought and emotion in meditation would viewed by this teacher as likely being a beginning meditation student versus a student working with too much dullness or too much mental activity in his/her practice would be viewed as being more advanced.

Taken together, these results suggest that students' increased ability to describe their meditation experiences and the quality of their practice, as well as students' increased awareness and ability to have perspective on their own awareness, are components of praxis across different Buddhist traditions.

3.4 View

In alignment with the prospect of people "inter-viewing" (that is, intimately expressing and/or listening to another's view) via conducting an interview, T1 encouraged beginning students to explore practices among different Buddhist traditions. T1 likened the student's process of exploring meditative practices within different traditions to learning music: "Somebody comes to me and says I want to learn music. I say great. You know, do you want to learn the guitar, the violin, or the saxophone? And they say, well I don't know I just want to learn music. So I say, well try a few instruments…they go to a Shambhala weekend…go to a Zen weekend….eventually, hopefully, they land somewhere." This teacher's instruction and assessment of students was largely based on the value of being exposed to different traditions to deepen praxis, emphasizing the importance of praxis over philosophical lens. He said: "As people get more advanced, they're better able … to identify the core principles that come into play in all of these traditions."

Results also indicated that teachers did not place importance on subscribing to a particular set of beliefs, philosophy or spiritual understanding. When asked if it mattered if their students held different views than their own, T1 and T2 indicated that the student's belief system was not important, whereas T3 asserted that beliefs may actually get in the way of moment to moment experience, potentially interfering with this practice itself. In their instruction, all three teachers emphasized the praxis of meditation instruction over the teaching of philosophy.

3.5 Direct Experience

The importance of direct experience as a tool for contemplative education was evident in all three data sets. Results suggested that the intrinsic verity of direct experience was an immensely relevant component of actualizing the essence of a practice. With regard to the teaching and importance of philosophy, T1 said "Trust your own experience. There's a particular sutra that's the basic point of the teaching is that don't believe a scripture, don't believe a teacher, don't take my word for anything. Try this. See what your experience is, and if it's useful, use it. If it's not, put it aside." T2 shared this viewpoint, saying that within the Zen tradition a central teaching is the realization of emptiness, which is an "experiential situation" by its nature. Similarly, all teachers in this study emphasized the importance of experiencing the body and breath in the moment as a means to understand basic Buddhist principals. T3 described that at an introductory level, an "allegiance to being in the body and being with the breath and not hanging onto thoughts" is his basic teaching. Through directly experiencing their body and breath they are able to gain a wiser perspective that prepares them for further teachings. T2 also discusses his introductory teachings as being primarily body-based, emphasizing posture as a means to directly experience stillness: "The way we approach meditation is basically sitting in raw awareness. It's an alignment of body, breath and mind. Body is straightened along a column in front of the spine. It is an organizational principle through the perineum to the top of the head. We begin with following the breath and allowing mental thoughts

to occur as they occur but not indulging them. And then gradually residing in the space between the thoughts, which is the field of raw awareness. By establishing a point of stillness, then we can begin to really understand the moving mind and the still mind." Through engaging with the sensory information, they are able to witness important teachings within the framework of their own body, employing direct experience as a potent teaching tool.

3.6 Purpose of Meditation

Each teacher was asked directly about the purpose of meditation, and the variety among their responses is enticing, as seen below in Table 1. Additional data pertaining to meditation purpose arose in response to questions that asked about other topics.

Table 1: Responses to the question "What is the purpose of meditation?"

Teacher	Complete Verbatim Response
T1	Liberation. Awakening. Enlightenment. Freedom. Choose your term. Full actualization of human potential would be another way to say it that's a little more earthy, but also, I think, true. Someone once described the Buddha as a fully mature human being which is an image that I like.
T2	There is no purpose to meditation.
T3	To be more present with who you are and how you feel and what you're doing. To be more aware and more - to see more clearly.

T1 explains meditation as "In that process, they have a direct and very personal experience of what in Buddhist practice would be called the 3 marks of existence, right? The impermanence, suffering if you cling, and the fact that there's no solid somebody in here who's the recipient of all this changing experience. And so this practice in particular is designed to move the 3 marks from a conceptual to a felt experience in one's being that leads to a kind of cellular change in the way people experience themselves and the world. …It's analogous to brightening a flashlight and getting it really, really bright, so that when you then open the field, the awareness is really hot and alive and can observe the changing phenomena with great power and intensity. " He then goes on to exhort the importance of carrying over awareness into post meditation: "There's a whole set of teachings that we offer about what we call meditation in action, which is basically moving the principles of meditative awareness into daily life activities. …It's really essential that the principles of meditation are understood in such in a way to be not limited to formal sitting practice. So the notion of mindfulness, for example, applies as much to washing dishes as it does as paying attention to the breath or to some phenomenon of awareness in a formal sense. And so the emphasis is on seeing your life as your practice. Each moment is an opportunity to be mindful and relate with a compassionate awareness or not. "Yet T1 also recognizes a skillful flexibility inherent to the path of meditation: "And as you go up that spectrum of integration psychologically, people get increasingly interested in the liberation dimension of what practice allows them to access. So I see it as kind of a developmental spectrum, depending on where the person practicing is, they relate to it differently in terms of its function." None the less, he is able to offer a pith summary: "My experience, as well as my belief, is that meditation training is one of the most well established and effective ways to bring human potential to its full fruition."

For T2, "One of the objects or intents of the meditative process is to come to a deeper understanding of what's actually going on, which is quite difficult, to actually see, know what's going on. Even to get close to that is difficult to do. And then that's really to point. It's to acquire a condition of total ordinariness in relationship to what's going on. Being with - not pushing away from, or rejecting or trying to seduce or magnetize the reality. Just to actually know what is going on beyond the editing of your mind." Furthermore, "by establishing a point of stillness, then we can begin to really understand the moving mind and the still mind. …Meditation is learning to work with what arises in the moment, period." And further still, "I mean, the subject largely is integration. People come to meditation frequently to get rid of this or that about themselves, and this is a real problem with the advancement in meditation. So, how to accept all parts that are going on and integrate them into one whole, so that everything contributes to being the present in the moment when there's part of you that's arguing and try to pull you away from that." T2 went on to say "I think that meditation is transformative over the long run. And I don't think it's so much of a skill set as it is a equanimity, peacefulness, generosity, tranquility, natural intelligence. There's a quality of the meditative mind that's tapped into a deeper resource than even your own personal learning has brought you. So there's a trust, an access to knowledge. But a deep trust that goes on with what happens in the moment. One skill may be to not try to manipulate and control your existence but be there while it's happening - a spectator, so to speak, of the phenomenal flow of existence." And finally: "It's not about attaining anything at all. It's about cutting through the vast mental delusion and storylines that we create every minute of our lives that keep us away from authentic experience. All meditation is about becoming genuine, who you are, true nature."

For T3, "Meditation is a process which increases awareness and increases mindfulness. … I feel like meditation is the most intimate experience a person could have with themselves." In addition, "in terms of meditation in action, post meditation, how to shift the object of awareness into what's happening in their life."

3.7 Nondual Awareness

The central importance of nonduality and nonconceptual awareness was evident in the verbal data provided by all 3 teachers. When speaking of advanced students, T1 stated "Their questions tend to be a little more subtle and sensitive in terms of the aspects of meditation they ask about or want to talk about. I think in general the process has more depth and, and more power, oftentimes from the standpoint of spiritual energy and focus." This same teach also explained "There's a point at which the notion of meditating and not-meditating dissolves. It's a dualistic notion, and if we talk about meditation and post meditation, …and meditation and daily life and so on and so forth, those are useful constructs I think, but to a point. And on another level, meditating at a certain point becomes synonymous with being, and at that point it's non-dual and is just is-ness or such-ness."

Similarly, but from a different perspective, T2 responds to the question "What is meditation?" with "Well, the way we approach meditation is basically sitting in raw awareness. It's an alignment of body, breath and mind. …And then gradually residing in the space between the thoughts, which is the field of raw awareness." Furthermore, "From zazen point of view, the essence is the understanding of emptiness - the experience of emptiness, and all of it is the establishment of that field."

From still another vantage point, T3 distinguishes between meditators at a beginning stage and meditators at an intermediate stage with "Well, there's more awareness of the awareness behind the process. So, people who have gone beyond just noticing overtly what's happening. They have more of an awareness with the background of that. So, they might see through thoughts and notice gaps, and that in itself is seeing the see-er. I would consider that somebody more advanced rather than somebody who initially just sees things, lets them go, and comes back. So, more of vipassana kind of awareness." She also addressed the distinction between meditating and not meditating with "Sometimes meditation comes to you. You are not efforting, but that doesn't mean that you're not present. So, it becomes non-dual."

3.8 View Mixing With Nonconceptuality

Seasoned practitioners are less narrow minded about view at level of relative truth, and show higher minded openness to what is common among Buddhist lineages. For example, T1 commented about students who over the course of many years train in multiple lineages: "And as people get more advanced, they're better able to, to identify the core principles that come into play in all of these traditions." For T1, "I draw tremendous inspiration and joy from the teachings and concepts and ideas that support me in practice. At the same time, I see clear limitations to conceptual understanding. …I'm much more interested in a kind of non-dualistic reality that is. …And any concept, however profound or primordial, is just a concept, right? So there's a paradoxical dimension of both/and, which traditionally, in Buddhism, has to do with the absolute and the relative …On the absolute level, concepts are just smoke dissolving into space. On the relative level, they are skillful means and essential to convey the teachings."

T2 concisely offers yet another paradox: "Well, my own belief is paramount, because it regards all belief as a problem. So, I talk about pure mind - I mean empty mind, without any preconceptions or predisposition. That itself is a belief. I am very strongly involved with that belief."

Similarly for T3: I think it's a problem if the belief system gets in the way of moment to moment experience no matter what the belief, even if it's a belief in all the philosophy of the tradition you're coming from.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Right View

All three teachers interviewed expressed similar perspectives concerning the importance and place of Right View within their practice. (This may be due to shared essential understanding of Buddhadhamma, rather than to shared elements of the cultural circumstances in which they teach.) When asked about the importance of having only one Right View (i.e. the importance of subscribing to a particular philosophy or belief system), they expressed that they placed a deeper value on practice, indicating an emphasis on praxis over philosophy.

Similarly, interview data indicated that beginning students' mundane understanding of Right View, the first factor on the Noble 8-Fold Path, often appears discrepant between traditions; however, when one's understanding of Right View transcends conceptual limits and is directly realized through deep practice, these discrepancies can dissolve. This suggests viability for concord between serious students of the Dhamma. Interestingly, two of the teachers had significant training and even experience teaching in more than one lineage. Perhaps inter-lineage contact facilitates realizing the profundity of Right View free from the discrepancy of sectarian ideology.

It has long been established that meditation and discipline are needed to support the deepening into ultimately wise Right View. Deep realization of the teachings may make it easier for a person to understand and appreciate the wisdom inherent in teachings of other lineages. Conversely, students may gain a deeper understanding of teachings presented within their own lineage by seeing this wisdom reflected in complimentary teachings provided by other Buddhist lineages.

Non-conceptual infusion of one's own view enables insightful recognition of the non-conceptual truth of another person's experience that lies behind their view. Some refer to this distinction in terms of ultimate vs. relative truth. It may be helpful for this to be addressed by teachers when their students are ready.

4.2 Establishing Methods

On a global level, one major outcome of this study was an embodiment of the intergroup contact theory and its potential for the cultivation of empathetic awareness of the other. By gathering data that reveal similarities and differences of right view, meditation, and instruction across lineages, the interview method itself brought together representatives from different lineages to have a structured dialogue about beliefs. The actual substance of these conversations offers an asset to searching for common ground between traditions. Who knows what benefit could result from such opportunities for different worldviews to interact? Many forms could be generated and explored, not limited to the standard modes of psychological research used in this study of focus group and interview.

4.3 Implications for Education

The proposed interview method has implications for both contemplative education as well as traditional education at the university level. The multiple layers of meaning in the word "inter-view," as proposed in this paper, may prove valuable for contemplative education. Inherently, contemplative education encompasses reflection, mindfulness and learning. Contemplative education aims to cultivate Right View through reflecting, seeing things as they are, and integrating mindful experience into learned material. The proposed method of interviewing, with interviewer and interviewee coming from different lineages, invites meditation students to not only have an "inter-view," where they are exposed to a different perspective on meditation practice, but also enhances students' "intra-view;" that is, the internal lens through which students view themselves, their meditation practice, and themselves in relation to others and the world. Thus, the proposed method of contemplative interviewing may be an example of contemplative education. In addition, the proposed method of interviewing serves as a contemplative practice in and of itself.

The innovative interview method can be practically implemented and utilized in any university setting. For example, a professor can establish rapport with local meditation centers or Buddhist temples to help university students gain access to meditation teachers. Alternatively, professors can assign as homework that students find a meditation teacher within a particular lineage different from their own, necessitating that they first figure out culturally appropriate ways to approach meditation teachers and ask them to be interviewed. Students may then write about their experience interviewing a teacher from a lineage other than their own. Class discussions could focus on what students learned about meditation or philosophy from the experience. Students could also interview teachers in pairs, similarly to how the interviews were conducted for the current study. For example, one student could serve as the interviewer and the other student could serve as the observer, mindfully being present to the interview and noticing their visceral experience during the interview. The students could then debrief with each other about their experience of the interview. Thus, there are many ways that the interview method proposed in this study could be implemented in university settings. (A list of helpful interview questions will be provided as a handout at this conference, and can also be obtained by emailing the first author of this paper.)

College students who collaboratively interview teachers could benefit not only from the fruits intergroup contact yields, but could also be a means of broadening their understanding of Right View. One benefit of conducting an "inter-view" is that some differences in Right View between lineages may come to be understood as reflecting specific vantages on the same Dhamma, rather than incompatible Buddhist philosophies. In some ways, this mirrors the spacious ventilation of view that a matured practitioner may evince, where one transcends the conceptual boundaries between the way a lineage describes the Dhamma, and realize the higher truths that are universally present in Buddhist thought. Here the distinction between inclusivism vs. pluralism may be important, where an inclusivist approach assimilates content from another person's view by translating it into one's own pre-existing conceptual framework. In contrast, a pluralistic approach necessarily grows beyond the current limits of one's conceptions in order make room for the conceptions provided by another person's view.

Philosophy is important, yet praxis seems essential for avoiding the mistake of holding on to one's own view as right. Nonconceptually infused Right View may be possible through extensive training and practice, and may also be facilitated through this inter-viewing, enabling disparate views to come into contact and increase empathetic awareness of a different perspective. We see the genuine value of inter-viewing as resting on the pivotal importance of direct experience of another wakeful human being. This new method contributes to contemplative education a novel contemplative practice in and of itself, and promotes intergroup contact among students and teachers from varying Buddhist traditions. Perhaps this method is most successful when it benefits from the profound presence of an accomplished teacher.

References

Allport, G. W. (1954). The nature of prejudice. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books

Rothbart, M., & John, O.P. (1985). Social categorization and behavioral episodes: A cognitive analysis of the effects of intergroup contact. Journal of Social Issues, 41(3), 81-104.

Engaged Buddhism as a Unifying Philosophy

Christopher S. Queen
Harvard University

I had the good fortune to begin my Buddhist studies under two of the great masters of the field in the 1960s and 1970s. Donald Swearer was still writing his doctoral dissertation on the *Visuddhimagga* when he became assistant professor at Oberlin College in 1965 – his first appointment and my first opportunity to be a teaching assistant; and Masatoshi Nagatomi became my teacher in 1975 after occupying the first chair of Buddhist Studies at Harvard following his own doctoral studies there. Both professors – one devoted to Pali literature and Theravada Buddhism, and the other to the literatures and schools of the Mahayana and Vajrayana – warned their students that the quest for a unifying philosophy of Buddhism was a fool's errand, and that anyone who spoke of "one Buddhism" had not done his homework. Nagatomi, in particular, would often begin his lectures with the proclamation that "Today, we will finally discover *what Buddhism is all about*!" With that, his eyes would twinkle, he would smile to himself, and we would get to work – analyzing a particular word in a particular text from a particular time and place in the long history of the traditions we still call Buddhism, as if they were a single religion.[1]

These pleasant memories of my teachers lead to some not-so-pleasant memories, as I disregarded their warnings and I immersed myself in the Buddhist canonical writings, commentaries and modern interpreters. As a graduate student, I wanted desperately to find a central idea or principle on which to hang all the others, if only to prepare more efficiently for the comprehensive examinations I would face before proceeding to the dissertation. And I discovered, to my surprise and delight, that there were many commentators ready to argue that a certain teaching, doctrine, or perspective *was indeed what Buddhism is all about.*

These commentators may still be found. In his recent study, *What the Buddha Thought*, a homage to Walpola Rahula's popular *What the Buddha Taught*, Richard Gombrich wrote in 2009 that "Karma is my favorite point of entry to the Buddha's worldview. …I believe that it is not only fundamental to the Buddha's whole view of life, but also a kind of lynchpin which holds the rest of the basic tenets together by providing the perfect example of what they mean." The law of karma

---

[1] Richard H. Robinson has written, "*Buddhism*—as a term to denote the vast array of social and cultural phenomena that have clustered in the course of time around the teachings of a figure called the Buddha, the Awakened One - is a recent invention. It comes from the thinkers of the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment and their quest to subsume religion under comparative sociology and secular history. Only recently have Asian Buddhists come to adopt the term and the concept behind it. Previously, the terms they used to refer to their religion were much more limited in scope: *the Dharma, the Buddha's message*, or *the Buddha's way.* In other words, they conceived of their religion simply as the teaching of the Buddha, what the Buddha himself called *Dharma-Vinaya* (Doctrine and Discipline). Whereas Dharma-Vinaya is meant to be prescriptive, advocating a way of life and practice, *Buddhism* is descriptive in that it simply denotes the actions of people who follow a vision of Dharma-Vinaya without suggestion that the reader accept that vision or follow it, too." Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, Fourth Edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 1-2. It is significant that the fifth edition of Robinson's text (co-authored by Willard Johnson and Thanissaro Bhikkhu) has been renamed *The Buddhist Religions* and treats the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions as "separate religions." Richard H. Robinson, Willard L. Johnson, and Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Religions: A Historical Introduction,* Fifth edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1004).

(*kamma niyāma*) is akin to a "law of nature, analogous to a law of physics," and it is the content of the first step in the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, the quintessential "right view" (*sammā diṭṭhi*).[2]

Reading Gombrich last summer, I was reminded of a wonderful book I had used to prepare for my general examinations – which also promised to help organize Buddhism into a unifying philosophy: Junjiro Takakusu's *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, published in 1947. Under the rubric, "Fundamental Principles of Buddhist Philosophy," the author begins with the Principle of Causation. He avoids reference to "karma" "because it is often confused with the idea of soul and thus leads to misunderstanding of Buddhist Doctrine." Instead, Takakusu prefers to relate the idea of causation to the teaching of dependent co-origination, *pratītyasamutpāda,* and the 12-fold cycle of birth, death and rebirth, the *nidānas.*[3] But what happened to the Buddha's first sermon, the Middle Path and the Four Noble Truths? I wondered. Here, the modern Theravada philosopher, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, points to the passage from the *Majjima-nikāya* that reads, "In the past, Bhikkhus, as well as now, I teach only *dukkha* and the utter quenching of *dukkha."* Anyone who calls himself "the servant of the Buddha" (a play on the author's name, Buddhadāsa) must faithfully carry out the Buddha's word. "*Dukkha* and its quenching" is a summary of the Four Noble Truths, he asserts, which is, in turn, the framework of all Buddhism. Santikaro, a disciple of Buddhadasa, comments, "Here we have the entire scope and range of the Buddha's teachings, although its heights and depths may not be immediately apparent."[4]

Buddhadāsa goes on to stress the central importance of "nature," including perceptible reality, the law that governs this reality, the duties that flow from this law, and the results that follow the performance or neglect of these duties. All of this is contained in the word *Dhamma.*[5] Here he is in agreement with the Russian Buddhologist, Theodor Stcherbatsky, whose book title from 1923, *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the word "Dharma,"* speaks for itself. But we cannot end this rehearsal of arguments for the One True Idea upon which all the other Buddhist ideas hang, without reference to another famous work, T. V. R. Murti's *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (1955), which begins with the claim, "The entire Buddhist thought turned on the Śūnyatā doctrine of the Mādhyamika," which, we learn a few pages later, is Nagarjuna's re-interpretation of the ancient *pratītyasamutpāda.*[6]

Are these competing arguments for the primacy of different core concepts in Buddhist philosophy mutually complementary or mutually cancelling? In a world in which competing ideologies, markets, and political entities are increasingly irreconcilable or even violent – are we more inclined to heed the warnings of Swearer and Nagatomi than we were forty years ago?

I share this experience with you, both because I suspect that you have had a similar one in your journey through Buddhist philosophy, and also because it reminds us of the hazards of system-building, to which philosophers, even Buddhist philosophers, are heir. At the same time,

---

[2] Richard Gombrich, *What the Buddha Thought* (London: Equinox, 2009), pp. 11, 19, 27. It may be noted that Walpola Rahula makes no such claims, presenting "the Buddhist attitude of mind" and the range of early teachings as an organic and evolving whole, allowing for contemporary (some would say "modernist") interpretations that resonate for readers and practitioners today. *What the Buddha Taught* (London: Gordon Fraser Gallery Ltd., 1959).

[3] Junjiro Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy,* (Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass, 1947), p. 23-24.

[4] Santikaro Bhikkhu, "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Life and Society through the Natural Eyes of Voidness," in Queen and King, *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia,* pp. 156f.

[5] Santikaro, p. 159.

[6] T. V. R. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Mādhyamika System* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1955), pp. vii, 7.

here we are, on an international panel titled "Unifying Buddhist Philosophical Views." And here am I, inviting you to consider the possibility that socially engaged Buddhism, as it has been manifested by social and political movements, non-governmental organizations, religious and philosophical thinkers, and a new literature over the past sixty years, throughout Asia and the West, may be a common ground for a convergence of the theory and practice of Buddhism in the 21st Century.

In the limited space that follows, I will not be able to lay out all the implications of the convergence that I have in mind. But what follows should be enough to suggest that such a convergence is underway and that a unifying Buddhist philosophy that transcends the traditional divisions of the Dharma – the Three Yānas – is possible. The methodology of my argument is empirical and inductive, drawing upon a cumulative body of field reports, case studies and published reflection by engaged Buddhists themselves.

Following a brief survey of some of the leading figures and groups, I will examine, again briefly, what we may call Three Marks of Engaged Buddhist philosophy – after the canonical *ti-lakkhana* of ancient Buddhist philosophy. These are Suffering (*theodicy*), Karma/Samsara (*consciousness/mind*), and the Five Precepts (*ethics*). Our texts will be drawn from the writings of three of the most influential engaged Buddhists: Thich Nhat Hanh, B. R. Ambedkar, and Sulak Sivaraksa. Finally, we will conclude with remarks on the challenge of engaged Buddhism as a unifying philosophy for future research and for the teaching of Buddhism in the university classroom.

The Scope of Engaged Buddhism

The rise of socially engaged Buddhism since the middle of the last century has been intensively documented and analyzed by scholars for more than thirty years. Widely identified with the anti-war activism of the Vietnamese Thien master, Thich Nhat Hanh, who coined the expression "engaged Buddhism" in the 1960s; the decades-long struggle for Tibet led by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama; the Buddhist conversion of millions of India's Dalits, launched by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 1956; the Sarvodaya Shramadana village development and peace movement in Sri Lanka, founded by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratna in the 1950s; and the liberation movements for Cambodia and Burma led respectively by the late Maha Ghosananda and the Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, the principles of Engaged Buddhism have shaped thinkers, activists, and non-governmental organizations throughout Asia and the West.[7]

To encompass the range and depth of this evolution in Buddhist precept and practice – sometimes called a Fourth Yana or *Navayāna* ("new vehicle") – one must include the Pure Land practitioners of China and Taiwan who employ the term *Humanistic Buddhism* (人間佛教; *Rénjiān Fójiào*), including Foguangshan, Ciji Gongdehui, and Fagushan in Taiwan, and temples affiliated with the Chinese Buddhist Association and Hong Kong Buddhist Association in the People's Republic of China; and the international peace groups inspired by the Nichiren traditions of Japan: Soka Gakkai, Rissho Kosei-kai, and Nipponzan Myohoji. In the West, Engaged Buddhism is

[7] More than forty scholars have contributed to the anthologies I have co-edited on the history and phenomenology of Engaged Buddhism since 1996: *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996, with Sallie B. King); *Engaged Buddhism in the West* (Somerville, Mass., Wisdom Publications, 2000); *Action Dharma: New Studies in Engaged Buddhism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, with Charles Prebish and Damien Keown). Hundreds of articles and monographs may be added to this bibliography over the past thirty years.

represented by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Zen Peacemakers, and Buddhist Global Relief (founded by the renowned scholar-monk Bhikkhu Bodhi), among many others in the United States, and by peace, justice, and service groups in the UK, Europe, Latin America, South Africa, and Australia. Finally, we make note of two organizations that represent engaged Buddhists from all the traditional *yānas* and sects: the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), and Sakyadhītā, "Daughters of the Buddha," devoted to the revival and support of *bhikkhuni sanghas* worldwide.

In addition to the international dispersion of Buddhist organizations explicitly devoted to social action and social service – both within the traditional branches of the Dharma and transcending them – we must consider a much larger phenomenon throughout the Buddhist world. This is the fact that local Buddhist sanghas have begun to include social outreach and service *as an integral part of their spiritual practice* – not to be mistaken for outreach for new members or public sponsorship of traditional Buddhist rituals and study. This outreach typically takes the form of service or fundraising for the poor and needy, for victims of natural disasters, and activism for progressive social change. Peace and justice work, environmental protection, and voluntary service in hospices and prisons are among the actions that rank-and-file Buddhists have taken up with greater determination and focus since the appearance of large-scale liberation movements and NGOs on the world stage.[8]

Overarching the great variety of challenges these groups confront in the world today – war, poverty, caste, terrorism, environmental and natural disasters, to name only a few – and the widely divergent practice vehicles from which the practitioners come – Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana – *there is growing evidence of a unifying philosophy or set of universal principles that uniquely transcend local Buddhist cultural and sectarian histories***.** The most salient example of this is the profound evolution of the very notion of "suffering," as it was presented in the Four Noble Truths of the earliest scriptures. Engaged Buddhists universally see the political, economic, and ecological causes of "social suffering," in addition to the psychological and spiritual suffering that Buddhist ritual and mental training has traditionally addressed. Second, ancient conceptions such as karma, rebirth, interdependence, merit-making and merit-transfer are seen in new ways that facilitate global Buddhist cooperation and alliances with other religious and civil-society associations. Finally, new methods of social action and interpretation inform many familiar formulations of the dharma. The Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts, the Brahmaviharas and the Paramitas are now invested with social and collective meanings related to the rise of information technology and social networking, geopolitical and economic interdependence, and revolutions in healthcare and education. Let us consider an example from each of these categories.

Three Marks of Engaged Buddhist Philosophy:

Suffering**:** A classic expression of socially engaged Buddhism is the poem, "Call Me by My True Names," by Thich Nhat Hanh. Written in 1976, after the author heard of a twelve-year-old girl, one of the boat people crossing the Gulf of Siam, who was threw herself into the sea after being raped by a sea pirate, the poem was eventually included in a collection of "writings on nonviolent

[8] These local initiatives are regularly documented in the pages and on the website of *Turning Wheel*, the quarterly journal of Engaged Buddhism, published by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Berkeley, California. They may also be increasingly found in the more mainstream glossy magazines of American Buddhism, *Tricycle, Shambhala Sun, and Buddhadharma*, each of which has an active online community.

social change" titled *Love in Action* (1993). Nhat Hanh, already an international figure following his anti-war activism in the 1960s, confessed his anger at the story of the girl, but realized after meditating for several hours that he could not "just take sides against the pirate. I saw that if I had been born in his village and brought up under the same conditions, I would be exactly like him. Taking sides is too easy. Out of my suffering, I wrote this poem."

In addition to the stanza telling of the girl's violent death, and identifying with both the girl and the pirate, the poem also contains these stanzas: "I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin as bamboo sticks. And I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda. I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands, and I am the man who has to pay this 'debt of blood' to my people,' dying slowly in a forced-labor camp. My joy is like spring, so warm that it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth. My pain is like a river of tears, so vast that it fills all four oceans. Please call me by my true names, so I can wake up and open the door of my heart, the door of compassion."[9]

Here the central teaching of "*dukkha* and its quenching" and the Four Noble Truths that it summarizes, is subjected to a profound transformation. Suffering is still presented as universal for sentient beings. The poem begins with an evocation of life-and-death in the predatory cycles of nature, as the bird swoops down to swallow the mayfly, and grass-snake "silently feeds itself on the frog." But the causes of the suffering of the creatures and humans caught in webs of violence and death range far beyond the characteristics of the sufferers themselves – called hatred, greed, and delusion in the canonical accounts. Instead we see the workings of Darwinian selection and of global marketing. We see personalities twisted by poverty and politics and we see children helpless to escape the conditions that have descended upon their families and countries. In a word, we see victims whose suffering is not attributed to their own blighted karma or their own willful cravings and ignorance. We see a world that is truly interdependent, not the world that would appear to be implied by the traditional formulation – where suffering and its quenching is the sole responsibility of the sufferer.

Finally, Thich Nhat Hanh calls the recognition of his "true names" – his identification with all who suffer and all who rejoice – an awakening. This is his interpretation of the third noble truth, the experience of Nirvāna, the opening of the heart to compassion for all beings. It is a deep perception of the interdependence, *pratītyasamutpāda,* and of *śūnyatā,* the absence of definitive essences (*svabhāva*) in the dramas of life: predator and prey, evil pirate and innocent girl, genocidal cartel and virtuous villager.

Karma/Saṃsāra In the introduction to *The Buddha and His Dhamma,* written in the final, turbulent years of his life and published posthumously in 1957, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, principal draftsman of the Indian constitution, voice of the Dalits or ex-Untouchables between the 1920s and 1950s, and convert to Buddhism just before his death, highlights four problems for modern readers of the life and teachings of the Buddha. Referencing Pali sources, Ambedkar questions the story of the Buddha's "going forth" at the age of 29: the idea that a gifted young man would abandon his family and career after witnessing illness and death for the first time "is not plausible." Ambedkar calls the Four Noble Truths "a great stumbling block in the way of non-Buddhists accepting the gospel of Buddhism," rooting universal suffering in the hearts and

[9] Thich Nhat Hanh, "Please Call Me by My True Names," in *Love in Action: Writings on Nonviolent Social Change* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1993), pp. 107-109.

minds of sufferers but ignoring its social causes. Ambedkar finds the teachings of non-self, karma and rebirth to be contradictory, invoking the age-old question of how moral effects can be transmitted from moment to moment or life to life by a non-entity. Finally, Ambedkar questions the motivation and mission of the Buddhist clergy: are monks dedicated to their own perfection or to the service of others?[10]

As the bible of millions of Dalits who followed Ambedkar into Buddhism, *The Buddha and His Dhamma* is not a rejection of the traditional jewels of Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, as it might sound from these initial queries. But in his analysis of the central doctrines of the tradition, Ambedkar subjects the earliest records to what I have called "the hermeneutics of Buddhist liberation." Each teaching is viewed through the "subaltern" eyes of those who, like Ambedkar, have experienced the social shunning, poverty and violence of the Indian caste system. For these witnesses, the story of a young man of privilege who renounces family and social responsibilities is baffling. A reading of human suffering that stresses the sufferer's ignorance and craving hits close to home: don't the poor crave education and the basic necessities of life? Teachings that dissolve or disparage the struggling, embodied self by reference to invisible forces and previous lives are mystifying, if not humiliating. And the luxurious lifestyle of the cloistered monks Ambedkar met in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Nepal seemed to him a travesty of the Buddha's injunction to wander "for the benefit and happiness of the many-folk, out of compassion for the world."

The uneven texture of *The Buddha and His Dhamma* reveals Ambedkar's advancing illness in his final years. (It became necessary for him to marry his medical doctor in order for her to care for him without scandal; no other Brahmin doctor would enter the house of an Untouchable.) His principles of selection and analysis were stated clearly in a section of the work titled "Causes of Misunderstanding" (254-255). Noting that the Pali canon remained an oral tradition for hundreds of years before it was written down, and citing five *suttas* in which the Buddha is shown correcting his followers' memory slips or willful distortions in reporting his words, Ambedkar warns that, "One has to be very careful in accepting what is said in the Buddhist canonical literature as being the word of the Buddha."

Singled out for special mention in the section on misunderstandings are the teachings on karma and rebirth. Just as there are natural laws governing the movement of heavenly bodies and the growth of plants – *rutu niyāma* and *bija niyāma* – so there must be a moral order in society. This is the meaning of *kamma niyāma,* the law of Karma. Indeed, no one can fail to benefit from positive actions, *kusala kamma*, or escape the ill effects of negative ones, *akusala kamma.* But the effects of karmic intentions and actions are unpredictable: they may be immediately apparent, or they may be delayed, remotely discernable, too weak to operate, or counteracted by karma from another source. Karmic effects cannot be limited to the actor; sometimes actions affect others more demonstrably than they do the actor.

Here Ambedkar moves inexorably toward the collective or social perspective that he called Navayana, "new vehicle," – and that we may identify as engaged Buddhism. *Kusala kamma* will bring about a *beneficial moral order for humanity*, he argues, while *akusala kamma* will lead to a broken moral order. In the end, *kamma niyāma* "has nothing to do with the fortunes or misfortunes of an individual. It is concerned with the maintenance of the moral order in the universe."

[10] B. R. Ambedkar, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, third edition (Bombay: Siddharth Publication, 1984), pp. xli-xlii.

"Individuals come and individuals go, but the moral order of the universe remains." In this way, *kamma niyāma* takes the place of God in other religions, he concludes.[11]

What about *saṃsāra* – not only the notion of rebirth, but particularly the transmission of individual karmic effects from one life to the next? The Buddha believes in rebirth – *but of what or whom?* At death the body returns to its constituents, whether considered as the traditional earth, air, fire, and water, or the chemical elements and energy of modern science. Yet these elements and forces are not annihilated. Rather they return to the pool of matter and energy from which new bodies and minds emerge. Only in this sense can the Buddha be said to have believed in rebirth. His analysis of the self into the *khandas* or heaps of psycho-physical patterning is compelling and congruent with current psychological research, Ambedkar argues, but it does not provide a platform for personal reincarnation.

If one must look for a mechanism of transmission of influence from the past, we are better served by the sciences of genetics and embryology. After noting the biology of conception as understood today, Ambedkar cites a text in which the Buddha explains the facts of life to a *yakkha* on Indra's Peak. Following the four stages of fetal development, nourished by the mother's diet, a child is born with characteristics inherited from the parents. Yet it was the Hindus that believed that the body is genetic, but the soul is implanted into the body from outside – from an unspecifiable source. Here Ambedkar lowers the gavel on the doctrine of transmigration: if a characteristic is neither inherited from parents nor acquired from experience – presumably in the womb or after birth – then it cannot be detected by scientific means. It remains "an absurdity."

Why, then, did the teaching of karma/*saṃsāra* have such powerful currency at the Buddha's time and up to the present – even to the extent that it was imported into Buddhism by renegade editors? "The only purpose one can think of is to enable the state or society to escape responsibility for the condition of the poor and lowly. …It is impossible to imagine that the Buddha, who was known as the *Maha Karunika*, could have supported such a doctrine."[12]

Five Precepts Along with Thich Nhat Hanh and Dr. Ambedkar, who fought courageously to end the ravages of war and caste in their respective societies, the Thai intellectual and activist, Sulak Sivaraksa, has earned international recognition as a crusader for human rights and environmental justice in his native 'Siam', as he insists on calling a country still controlled by a military-industrial complex. Jailed more than once for exposing public corruption, Sulak is the founder and guiding spirit of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists today.

In his most widely read work, *Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* (1992), Sulak addresses the "politics of greed," "the religion of consumerism," "development as if people mattered," "personal and societal transformation," and "Buddhism with a Small 'b.'" Perhaps the most memorable section of the book is his engaged Buddhist readings of the *panca śīla* or Five Precepts of moral discipline, which constitute, along with the Three Refuges (*ti-saraṇam*), the central formula of Buddhist identity in the Theravada world. By "engaged Buddhist readings," I mean that in each case the admonition to refrain from *akusala kamma*, unskillful and unwholesome conduct, is related to a wider world of social and institutional relationships than the dyadic paradigm implied in the canonical texts. Now it is the ripple effects of violent speech and

[11] Ambedkar, pp. 170-173.
[12] Ambedkar, pp. 242-248.

actions, of the abuse of sexuality and intoxicants, and of confiscatory behavior that comes into view. It is the institutions that cause mass killing through the manufacture of armaments and insecticides, and through industrial animal farming that fall under the precept "to abstain from taking life." The second precept, "to abstain from stealing," is extended beyond petty theft or shoplifting. Sulak writes:

> Economic justice is bound up with Right Livelihood. We must take great pains to be sure there are meaningful jobs for everyone able to work. And we must also take responsibility for the theft implicit in our economic systems. To live a life of Right Livelihood and voluntary simplicity out of compassion for all beings and to renounce fame, profit, and power as life goals are to set oneself against the structural violence of the oppressive status quo. But is it enough to live a life of voluntary simplicity without also working to overturn the structures that force so many people to live in involuntary poverty?[13]

The precept against sexual misconduct directs the practitioner "to look at the global structures of male dominance and the exploitation of women," while the precept against false speech is applied to abuses of "the mass media, education, and patterns of information that condition our understanding of the world. …The Quakers have a practice of 'speaking truth to power.' It will only be possible to break free of the systematic lying endemic in the status quo if we undertake this truth-speaking collectively." Finally, the precept against taking intoxicants" is extended to the disastrous effects on Third World economies of the promotion of the cash crops of heroin, coco, coffee, and tobacco, when an agrarian system based on locally distributed food crops – rice and vegetables – is consistent with principles of economic justice and self-sufficiency. Citing the "unloading of excess surplus cigarette production onto Third World consumers through intensive advertizing campaigns," Sulak concludes that we must also "examine the whole beer, wine, spirit, and drug industries to identify their power base."[14]

Conclusion

Like Christianity and Islam, Buddhism has been a universal religion from the beginning – the Buddha's *dhamma* was directed to all people, not only to members of a tribal or sectarian group. Yet the local variations of Buddhism that evolved in places like Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Tibet, Mongolia, Japan, Cambodia, and Indonesia remained largely isolated from one another following their introduction by itinerant merchants and missionaries. Local assimilation and varieties of Buddhist thought and practice advanced in a branching-coexisting fashion over the centuries, making it unreasonable to speak of "Buddhism" in the singular throughout most of the history of the tradition. Even within countries as small as Sri Lanka and Tibet, doctrinal and ceremonial differences among the local monastic orders and lineages engendered intense rivalries over the centuries.[15]

Today, these patterns of differentiation and diffusion continue. But at the same time, with the rise of socially engaged Buddhism, we see the outlines of a counter-tendency. As a result of accelerating communication and travel, engaged Buddhism has emerged as a truly global impulse,

13 Sulak Sivaraksa, *Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1992), p. 75.

14 Sulak, pp. 76-79.

15 Some scholars, like the late Prof. Masatoshi Nagatomi of Harvard, speak of *Buddhisms* in the plural, to disabuse students of the erroneous impression that a monolithic tradition with universal teachings and practices may be found.

growing out of and interacting with all the sectarian and cultural expressions of the ancient tradition. For this reason, Dr. Ambedkar suggested a new name for the socially engaged Buddhism that he envisioned on the eve of his historic conversion in October 1956. Answering a reporter's question about the branch of Buddhism he and his followers planned to join, the Dalit leader proclaimed, "Our Buddhism will follow the tenets of the faith preached by Lord Buddha, without stirring up the old divisions of [Theravada] and Mahayana. Our Buddhism will be a New Buddhism—*a Navayāna.*"[16]

It must be noted that the majority of engaged Buddhists in Asia and the West are not involved in political activism. A great many are involved in "service dharma" – helping the poor, ministering to the incarcerated, the dying, and the socially marginalized. In this they are no different from the teaching and medical missionaries from the Christian denominations and secular organizations such as the International Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Doctors Without Borders. Yet the Engaged Buddhists offer something not offered by the others. This is a philosophy of interdependence, impermanence, and universality which sees all people is equally subject to suffering and exploitation, and equally capable of realizing freedom and dignity. They have conceptions of loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity which are supported by specific techniques of cultivation. *Mettā bhāvanā* (loving-kindness meditation), for example, begins by wishing oneself peace and wellbeing; then it extends this wish, successively to loved-ones, acquaintances, persons in general, and then to those who would harm you – your enemies. Jesus taught the love of enemies too, but he didn't offer specific techniques to cultivate loving responses in situations of imminent danger and over a lifetime.

Finally, there is great unity among the engaged Buddhists on one point: that the existence of suffering in the world evokes in them a feeling of "universal responsibility," as the Dalai Lama has called it, and the traditional Mahayana vow to "save all beings." Engaged Buddhists agree that such a feeling impels them to go beyond the vow, by rising together to act "in the world." In a time when those who speak of "saving the world" can expect snide derision, if not social ostracism, engaged Buddhists are uninhibited in their expression of universal compassion (*maha karuna*). I have argued here that this impulse – and its grounding in the Buddha as *Maha Karunika*; in a Dharma that sees the social and institutional causes of suffering alongside the spiritual sufferings that accompany one's own decay and death; and a Sangha made up of lay and ordained volunteers and activists dedicated social service and reform – is the ground on which a new, unifying Buddhist philosophy is coming into view.

As one who has taught courses on socially engaged Buddhism over the past twenty years, I can attest that students have shown a keen interest in following and writing about the activities and the nascent philosophy of this movement. Now it remains for scholars to take up the task of studying these developments with the kind of energy and rigor that we associate with the historical and exegetical studies of classical Buddhism. It is my belief that such attention will be richly rewarded.

[16] This paraphrase of Ambedkar's press conference is based on Dhananjay Keer's account in *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, 3rd ed. (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1971), 498.

From Nāgārjuna to Ajahn Chah: Buddhist deconstruction in theory and practice

Asst. Prof. Dr. Dipti Mahanta
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

The Dhamma Path is to keep walking forward.
But the true Dhamma has no going forward,
no going backward, and no standing still.
-Luangpho Chah

Prelude:

This paper is an attempt at analyzing the deconstructive mode of practice in Nāgārjuna, the second century Buddhist logician and Ajahn Chah (Phra Bodhiṅana Thera), a well-known twentieth-century meditation master from the Thai-Isan forest tradition. While deconstruction as a movement in philosophy came into origin from the writings of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1936-2004), many of its fundamental concepts like dismantling of binaries and trace had been predominantly prevalent in Buddhism ever since its appearance as a new soteriological mode of praxis more than 2600 years ago. Given the antiquity and ubiquity of polarized thought processes dominating every human discourse, it is interesting to see how dismantling of binaries takes place, on the one hand, through the use of logical propositions by Nāgārjuna and on the other hand, through rigorous mindfulness practice based on vipassanā meditation by Ajahn Chah. Nāgārjuna's primary contribution to Buddhist philosophy is in the use of the concept of śūnyatā, or "emptiness," systematically expounded in his treatise Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way) and which he famously rendered in his tetralemma with the logical propositions:

X (affirmation)
non-X (negation)
X and non-X (both)
neither X nor non-X (neither)

While Ajahn Chah refrains from using any such syllogistic method, his formulaic practice of 'letting go' is a powerful conceptual tool to put the mind into test in fully recognizing the three characteristics of existence – anicca, dukkha and anattā in all dependent co-relational dimensions. The cerebral practice of 'letting go' has its roots in formal practice of insight or vipassanā meditation along with strict adherence to precepts and monastic codes and moment to moment awareness of every arising thought, be it wholesome or unwholesome. Practice, decipher, and let go – this method is not only well demonstrated through Ajahn Chah's extraordinarily disciplined monastic lifestyle

and practice, but also gets reinforced in the numerous dhamma talks that he delivered to both his monastic and lay disciples. Interspersed by thought-provoking similes and metaphors, the dhamma talks demonstrate to what extent Ajahn Chah strategically aimed at deconstructing dichotomous thought-processes by mindfully defying reification of all mental formations, conditioned states and conventional linguistic signs – be it the written word or the verbal utterance. Derridean challenge to binary oppositions is centered upon deciphering and decoding logocentricism within the western philosophical paradigm, but what is deconstructed in the logical formulations of Nāgārjuna and the simple yet profound teachings of Ajahn Chah is not just language, but the human Ego itself in all its kammic dimensions – linguistic, psychological, social, ethical, cultural and conceptual orientations. Through the juxtaposition of Nāgārjuna and Ajahn Chah, this paper aims at discussing the implications of Buddhist deconstruction at the theoretical and practical level and how within this nexus there exists the continual downplaying of dualistic notions starting from the very concepts of me and mine, I and the other, existent and non-existent.

Introduction

Buddhism teaches that to understand the Four Noble Truths – suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path leading to its complete extinction – is to see reality as it truly is. Reality, in Buddhism is grounded on the perspective of non-substantialism and is understood not in terms of subjectivism of the individual self and its interaction with the world, but rather the objective understanding of the network of interdependently arising cause and effect continually coming into existence and subsiding.

The existence of things as well as their arising and passing away are clearly expressed in the famous formulaic statement: When that exists, this comes to be; on the arising of that, this arises. When that does not exist, this does not come to be; on the cessation of that, this ceases.[1]

Thus, Buddhist ontology rests on the premise that all phenomena are dependently originated. Due to the cause of dependent arising, all phenomena lack any absolute and intrinsic essence and are by nature devoid of any centric substantiality or selfhood. This emptiness of essence is what the Buddha termed *anattā* and which later came to be known as *śūnyatā* in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Taking into consideration this unique teaching of non-substantiality it would be neither wrong nor too far-fetched to claim that Buddhism in its core essence is a conscious and rigorous deconstructive practice that places the whole of our being and existence, both in the physical/material and mental/ spiritual sphere, under erasure. This is possible because Buddhism is an atheistic religion and views life as impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*).

Long before Western philosophy came to deconstruct the *epistemic* category of "self-presence" or "self-identity" through the logic of derridean *différance*[2], Buddhism recognized the fallacy inherent in the substantialist world-view with its focus on the self and had successfully dismantled it through the principle of causality or dependent arising. Dependent Origination or

1 *Majjhima-nikāya* 1.262-264, ed. V. Trenckner and R. Chalmers, London: PTS, 1887-1901.

2 The term denotes a differential relation in all systems and activities which infects them from the very beginning or outset with an 'otherness' that is non-present and that which is therefore incapable of interiorization or sublation. In his book entitled *Positions* Derrida writes, "Difference is the systematic play of differences of the traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other."

Causality (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is the central philosophy of Buddhism and through it the Buddha explained the functioning of phenomena or conditioned states (*dhammas*) without having resorted to a conception of a permanent and eternal entity. Since all phenomena are dependently arisen, inherent in them are the conditions of impermanence, suffering and non-self.

The Buddha put forth Dependent Origination as a naturally occurring principle of truth: Whether an enlightened Tathāgata were to appear in this world or not, this principle would still prevail as an enduring aspect of the natural order – that is, conditionality (*idappaccayatā*). Bhikkhus, objectivity (*tathatā*), necessity (*avitathatā*), invariability (*anaññathatā*) constitute the principle of conditionality (*idappaccayatā*) that is called dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).[3]

Thus it is clear that Buddhism looks at all things in terms of integrated factors. There is no real self or essence in all things and so the Cartesian dictum *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) that has influenced and directed western thinking down the centuries has a reverse call in Buddhism – I think, therefore I am NOT.[4] The Buddha's notion of non-substantiality (*anattā*) was the direct result of his rejection of a permanent and eternal entity arising as a result of the recognition of the existence of a personality *prior* (*pūrva*) to the experiences of seeing, hearing, and feelings. In a passage in the *Sutta-nipāta* the Buddha said, "Let him destroy the entire root of obsession with the self."[5] The Buddha's discourse on the five aggregates (*skandha*) was intended to refute the notion of a spiritual self (*ātta*) and the discourse on elements (*dhātu*) was meant to reject the notion of a material self or eternal matter. After his enlightenment, the Buddha still had physical ills, had feelings of pain and pleasure, had memories, thoughts, and consciousness. But he did not cling to them as being self, as being me or mine. He knew them as they were, and the one who knew was also not I, not self.

Looked at from the contemporary Derridean deconstruction with its critical questioning of all notions of "self-presence" or "self-identity", the Buddha appears to be a forerunner whose mega-deconstructionist mode of practice dismantled two absolutionistic theories prevalent during his time namely, the Upanishadic concept of permanent existence or eternalism (*sassata-diṭṭhi*) and the nihilistic concept of non-existence or annihilationism (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*). By denying these two opposing camps the Buddha laid the foundation of a way of thinking and practicing solidly based on the Middle Path in which the philosophical and the practical are not mutually exclusive but rather interdependent.

The Middle Path is not a theoretical standpoint but is a path that can be trodden by one and all, for the Buddha did not simply preach about it but taught the method to practice along this path. To arrive at a conceptual and experiential understanding of the Middle Path in its entire dimensionality it is essential to realize the four components involved – principle or axiomatic truths, perspective, conceptual framework, and practical method. Firstly, any understanding of the Middle Path starts with the understanding and acceptance of the axiomatic truths incorporated in the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) – suffering (*dukkha*), origin of suffering (*samudaya*), cessation of suffering

---

[3] *Saṁyuttanikāya.* II.25. Also quoted in full in PA Payutto, *Buddhadhamma*, tr., Grant A. Olson, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1995, p.77.

[4] Dipti Mahanta, "The Isan forest meditation tradition: A praxis of mental well-being vis-à-vis global recovery", *UNDV Conference Volume*, (Dion Peoples, ed.) Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, Bangkok, 2010, p.589.

[5] D. Anderson and H. Smith ed., *Suttā-nipāta* 916, PTS, London, 1913.

(*nirodha*) and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*magga*). Secondly, it is based on the perspective of the three characteristics of existence – impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anattā*) and the five aggregates (*pañcakkandha*) – corporeality (*rūpakkandha*), sensation (*vedanākkandha*), perception (*saññākkandha*), mental formation (*saṁkhārakkandha*) and consciousness (*viññāṇakkandha*). Thirdly, the Path itself is grounded on the conceptual framework of the dependent origination with all the twelve linking factors – ignorance (*avijjā*) → volitional actions or mental formations (*saṅkhāra*) → consciousness (*viññāṇa*) → mind-and-body (*nāma-rūpa*) → sense-bases (*salāyatana*) → contact (*phassa*) → sensation (*vedanā*) → craving (*taṇhā*) → attachment (*upādāna*) → becoming (*bhava*) → birth (*jāti*) → decay-and-death (*jarā-maraṇa*). And lastly, to investigate the Middle Path oneself and to realize it at the experiential level one applies the practical method of mindfulness i.e. the practice of *vipassanā* meditation.

The Middle Path was not superimposed by the Buddha as yet another "mega-narrative" to attract and manipulate new adherents. In fact the Buddha was quite open from the very beginning about all his teachings and encouraged analytical reflection and reasoned attention (*yonisomanasikāra*) more that blind faith. In the *Kalama Sutta*, the Buddha said, "…do not be laid by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea: 'this is our teacher'. But, O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome (*akusala*), and wrong, and bad, then give them up…And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome (*kusala*) and good, then accept them and follow them.'[6]

From this saying it is very clear that the Buddha urged his lay followers to use reason and not mere faith on any authority – religious text, teacher, tradition etc while trying to follow his teachings. Buddha's stance is deconstructive in so far as it does not place absolute power/authority on the text, tradition and teacher and renders the action of faith a democratic garb by making it depend on the free will of the believer and his or her rationalization of the process. The Buddha went even further. He told the *bhikkhus* that a disciple should examine even the *Tathāgata* (Buddha) himself, so that he (the disciple) might be fully convinced of the true value of the teacher whom he followed.

Within the socio-religious nexus the dialectics of deconstruction underlay Buddha's rejection of the hierarchical caste system that had a powerful grip on the traditional Hindu society, his *re*-interpretation of the term *brahman*, the Vedic tradition of worshipping the six directions, etc, but at the highest contemplative level, this dialectic manifested in his emphasis on overcoming clinging to everything, including his teachings.

Once the Buddha explained[7] the doctrine of cause and effect to his disciples, and they said that they saw it and understood it clearly, then the Buddha said: 'O bhikkhus, even this view, which is so pure and so clear, if you cling to it, if you fondle it, if you treasure it, if you are attached to it, then you do not understand that the teaching is similar to a raft, which is for crossing over, and not for getting hold of.'[8]

---

[6] As quoted in W Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, Haw Trai Foundation, Bangkok, 1990, pp.2-3.

[7] In the *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya-sutta*, no.38 of *Majjhima-nikāya*, PTS edition, London. See also, W Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, p.11.

[8] *Majjhima-nikāya* I, PTS, London, p. 260.

The simile of the *raft* is very powerful and through it devotees and disciples are taught non-attachment even to the supreme thing i.e., the dhamma. The metaphoric reference is not only suggestive of the Buddha's non-sectarian approach but also of his deep-rooted opposition to the formation of any 'mega-narrative' through his teachings.

But the Buddha knew that it was not easy for unenlightened people to go to the highest level of understanding in which all dualistic thought processes dissipate naturally and so to facilitate right understanding he taught at the foundational level of distinguishing truths into two categories – conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*) and ultimate truth (*paramattha-sacca*). In the *Kaccāyanagotta Sutta*, he distinguishes the two terms – *nītattha* (clear) and *neyyattha* (obscure) and observes:

> 'Everything exists,' – this, Kaccāyana, is one extreme.
>
> 'Everything doesn't exist,' – this, Kaccāyana, is the second extreme.'
>
> Kaccāyana, without approaching either extreme, the Tathāgata teaches you a doctrine by the middle..."[9]

Nāgārjuna's deconstruction

The understanding of reality as a network of dependent co-arising came to bear great influence not only in early Buddhism but in all later developments. In the Mahāyāna tradition, this dependency came to be interpreted in a three-fold way: firstly, it is to be understood that behind every phenomenon or a conditioned state there lays a network of causes and conditions; secondly, all wholes are dependent on their parts and vice-versa and finally, it is through conceptual imputation that phenomena come to be recognized and identified.

Nāgārjuna, the second century logician and founder of the extraordinarily dialectical analytic philosophical school known as Mādhyamika reiterated the principle of dependent arising or causality in order to make people understand the Buddha's original message of non-self that was on the verge of amnesiac metamorphosis due to infiltration of new interpretations from different Buddhist schools like the *Sarvāstivādins*, who came up with a theory of "self-nature" or "substance" (*svabhāva*) and the *Sautrāntikas* who uphold a non-identity theory of causation and a theory of moments.

In refuting the logician's criticisms, Nāgārjuna, himself a master dialectician, does not disdain formal logic. Why are all things 'void' (*śūnya*) or 'devoid of an 'intrinsic nature' (*nihsvabhāva*)? Nāgārjuna's 'reason' (*hetu*) is that all things are 'dependently originated'.

Thus, in his famous treatise on metaphysics and epistemology *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Fundamental verses on the Middle Way) he develops the argument on purely logical footing that since all phenomena exist interdependently they are empty of essence. In this text, comprising of 27 chapters, he re-investigates different concepts – causality, perception, motion, action, agency, selfhood, truths, elements of existence and views – through the use of the formulaic propositions of his strategically used *catuṣkoṭika* or tetralemma:

[9] L.Feer ed., *Saṃutta-nikāya* 2.17, PTS, London, 1884-1904.

X (affirmation)

non-X (negation)

X and non-X (both)

neither X nor non-X (neither)

No existents whatsoever are evident anywhere that are arisen from themselves, from another, from both, or from non-cause (I.1).[10]

But to teach the dependent origination Nāgārjuna had to restate the Buddha's distinction of truths into conventional and ultimate in an even more strident manner as expressed in the classic formulation in section XXIV of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*: The teaching of the doctrine by the Buddha is based upon two truths: truth relating to worldly convention and truth in terms of ultimate fruit. Those who do not understand the distinction between these two truths do not understand the propound truth embodied in the Buddha's message. Without relying upon convention, the ultimate fruit is not taught. Without understanding the ultimate fruit, freedom is not attained. (XXIV. 8-10)[11]

In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, through the extensive use of the logical apparatus of *catuṣkoṭika* Nāgārjuna was not only developing the argument that since all phenomena exist interdependently they are empty of essence, but he was doing something deeper at the level of inter-textuality. Just as most deconstructionist writings today strategically incorporate the philosophical mode of conceptualization into content rendition (the act of *re*-reading of all texts), Nāgārjuna was, in a sense, practicing in his own work the very didacticism involved therein. For he was not only referring back to the Buddha's original concepts of two truths – conventional and ultimate – while re-examining all the major concepts but was strategically demolishing the conventional understanding of these concepts through the higher reflective understanding of emptiness. In other words, by incorporating the conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*, Skt. *saṃvṛti-satya*) in the ultimate truth (*paramattha-sacca*, Skt. *paramārtha-satya*) he undermined the former by letting the latter dominate all along in the verses themselves. That is to say, he was making the treatise a "living" embodiment or a practical example of the position, "the *paramattha-sacca* captures and incorporates the *sammuti-sacca*."[12] The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* thus makes a concrete case for the view of two truths where the lower truth hinges upon the higher truth only to be teased apart and penetrated by the latter in its all-embracing and inclusive gesture of ethico-spiritual progression. The *catuṣkoṭika* is thus used by Nāgārjuna as a means by which the philosophical verses would lead one from the *sammuti-sacca* to the *paramattha-sacca* truth through a process of dialectical progression in thought and through meditation on the nature of things as "exposed" in the text. But most interestingly, Nāgārjuna never declares any conceptually formulated doctrine to fall in the category of *paramattha-sacca* himself because for him, ultimately even *śūnyatā* or emptiness is empty in itself and devoid of any substantiality whatsoever: Thus, because of the emptiness of all existents, where, to whom, which and for what reason view such as the eternal could ever occur? (XXVII.29)[13]

---

[10] David J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna – The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1986, p.105.

[11] Ibid., pp.331-333.

[12] R. D. Gunaratne, 'Understanding Naagaarjuna's Catuskoti' *Philosophy East & West* V. 36 No. 3, (July 1986), pp. 213-234, University of Hawaii Press.

[13] David J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna – The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, p.390.

In this penultimate verse of the final chapter "*dṛṣṭi-parīkṣā*" Nāgārjuna having absolutely denied the possibility of arising of any substantialist view in the face of emptiness of all existents he signs off his treatise with salutation to the Buddha and expressing his gratitude to the founder for teaching the doctrine of emptiness whereby he could relinquish all views: I reverently bow to Gautama who, out of compassion, has taught the true doctrine in order to relinquish all views. (XXVII. 30)[14]

With the aid of the four alternatives of the *catuṣkoṭika*: affirmation, negation, double affirmation, double negation, Nāgārjuna rejects all firm standpoints and traces a middle path between being and nonbeing. For instance, in an attempt to annihilate the Sarvāstivāda doctrine of dhamma that implied substantial and eternal existence (*sabbam sabbadā atthi*), Nāgārjuna established the non-substantiality of all phenomena or *dhammas* (Chapters III-XV). With equally cogent arguments he critiqued the metaphysical theory of a person (*pudgala*) propounded by the Sautrāntikas and their allies and established non-substantiality of the human self (Chapters XVI-XXI).

Just as for the Buddha for Nāgārjuna too, the emptiness of essence is the *ultimam veritatem* (ultimate truth) of all phenomena. For Nāgārjuna, as for the Buddha in the early texts, it is not merely sentient beings that are "selfless" or non-substantial; all phenomena are without any *svabhāva*, literally "own-being" or "self-nature", and thus without any underlying essence. They are *empty* of being independently existent. This is so because all things arise always depending on conditions leading to their coming into existence and not by the workings of any inherent inner force or independent power of their own. Since independent arising is an impossibility, it implies that all things are devoid of any essence or substantiality that is permanent and everlasting. In other words, to have an essence is to exist independently, having one's distinct identity and existing solely in virtue of intrinsic properties and not in virtue of extrinsic relations along. Because all phenomena are interdependent, all are empty in this sense. Nāgārjuna's philosophical exposition highlighted this essencelessness and voidness of all existents with the logico-spiritual equation – the conventional truth about phenomena is their interdependence and their ultimate truth is their emptiness.

In chapter IX, Nāgārjuna deconstructs the idea of a persisting self in the form of a prior entity that transmigrates by an unequivocal rejection of the substantialist thought of *mantā asmi*. His argument shows how absurd and logically unsound such an assertion is. The implication of this assertion, as Nāgārjuna perceives, is that such a personality has to be separated from the experiences that emerge subsequently. Nāgārjuna raises questions as to how such a being could be made known independent of the sense experiences thus implying that the self-being (*aham asmi*) is dependent. His argument is that if the sensory experiences of seeing, hearing, feeling etc., can be separated from the personhood, it follows that they could occur even without such a being or personality:

> "For whomsoever there exists seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc., he exists prior to these." So do some declare. How can there be seeing, etc. of an existent who is not evident? Therefore, it is determined that, prior to these things, such an existent is. Whatever existent is determined as existing prior to seeing, hearing, etc., and also feeling, etc., by what means is he [it] made known? If he is determined as existing even without seeing, etc., undoubtedly even these [i.e., seeing, etc.] will exist without him. Someone is made known by something. Something is made known by someone. How could there be someone without something and something without someone? Someone is not evident prior to all of seeing, etc. Again, on different occasions, one could be made known by things different from seeing, etc. If

[14] Ibid., 391.

someone existing prior to all of seeing, etc. is not evident, how can someone existing prior to each of seeing, etc., be evident. If a seer is, at the same time, a hearer and feeler, then someone would exist prior to each one [of the functions]. But this is not proper. If seer and hearer and feeler are different, then, when there is a seer, there also would be a hearer, and as such there would be a plurality of selves. It [i.e., the 'self'] is not evident in the elements from which seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc. come to be. If he, to whom belongs seeing, hearing, etc. and feeling, etc., is not evident, then even these would not be evident. Wherein someone prior to, simultaneously with or posterior to, seeing, etc. is not evident, therein thoughts of existence and non-existence are also renounced. (IX.1-12)[15]

Although Nāgārjuna assiduously treated all the core concepts of the Buddha's teachings in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*'s it must be noted that the ultimate purpose of the treatise was not to stake out a sectarian position (a "*diṭṭhi*/dṛṣṭi", or "view"). In fact, Nāgārjuna repeatedly and emphatically states that to make a "fixed view" of his teaching is to miss its point completely. The ultimate purpose of logical formulation is soteriological: to demonstrate the fallacy of clinging to views or any standpoint whatever, however valid or true and, in so doing, to remove an obstacle to enlightenment.

Luangpho Chah's deconstruction

Luangpho Chah as a sincere and diligent follower of the Buddha worked very much within the framework of a form of deconstruction that we may as well name as empirical deconstruction. Just like his predecessors, Luangpoo Mun, Luangpoo Sao, and others, Luangpho Chah's emphasis on the *thudhong*[16] practice geared his deconstructive endeavor to none other than the dawning of an inner peaceful state upon the transcendence of – the ego, conventional truths, mental-formations and attachment to all mental states. His numerous dhamma talks attest to the truth that he developed and adhered to a life's philosophy that was based on a rigorous deconstructive mode of practice that gave rise to a practical discourse of annihilation of the ego and the resultant understanding of any state of 'being' (both mental and physical) as it-is-in-itself. This mode of practice can thus be categorized as empirical deconstruction or deconstruction-in-praxis. Such a way of practice neither valorizes the 'written' text nor any logical syllogism, but renders the practice a moment-to-moment phenomenal and empirical garb without at the same time erecting a 'mega-narrative' of the self-at-practice. This is possible because critically reflective Buddhist deconstruction creates the fertile ground for a form of self-introspective practice/scrutiny that goes hand in hand with moral practice and non-attachment to the self and the practice practiced.

Just as Nāgārjuna's powerful use of the *catuṣkoṭika* stimulates meditative reflection on the interdependence of all conditioned states and their inherent emptiness, the deconstructive similes and metaphors that Luangpho Chah uses are equally thought provoking. In all his dhamma talks there are some extremely pithy statements that are located at strategic points. One such example is: "Regardless of time and place, the whole practice of Dhamma comes to *completion* at the place

---

[15] David J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna – The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, pp.188-194.

[16] Pāli: *dhutanga* is the austere practices recommended by the Buddha for monastics to overcome defilements and establish purification of the mind through the cultivation of renunciation, contentment and mindfulness. In the Thai context, the term usually refers to monks who practice an ascetic way of life focusing on wandering, long distance walking and outdoor meditation practice.

where there is *nothing*. It's the place of surrender, of emptiness, of laying down the burden. This is the finish. It's not like the person who says, "Why is the flag fluttering in the wind? I say it's because of the wind." Another person says because of the flag. The other retorts that it's because of the wind. There's no end to this! All these things are merely *conventions*, we establish them ourselves. If you know these things with wisdom then you'll know impermanence, suffering and not-self. This is the outlook which leads to enlightenment."[17]

While Derrida's challenge to binary oppositions is centered upon logocentricism, what is deconstructed in the teachings of Luangpho Chah is not just language, but the human Ego itself in all its kammic dimensions – linguistic, psychological, social, ethical and cultural garbs and orientations. In the numerous dhamma talks of this great renunciant monk of the forest tradition, it is clearly reflected that the trained mind of a meditator transcends its own ego and at a higher contemplative level proceeds to deconstruct all dualistic notions starting from the very concepts of me and mine, I and the other. As is succinctly expressed in one of his exhortations – "Give up clinging to love and hate, just rest with things as they are. That is all I do in my practice. Do not try to become anything. Do not make yourself into anything. Do not be a meditator. Do not become enlightened. When you sit, let it be. When you walk, let it be. Grasp at nothing. Resist nothing."[18]

Given the antiquity and ubiquity of binary thought processes dominating every human discourse, it is interesting to see how in almost all of Luangpho Chah's dhamma talks binary thoughts get ceaselessly dismantled time and again. Luangpho Chah's form of teaching does not involve grandiose theory, but a form of dhamma exposition that is simple, direct yet profound at the same time. While the entire Derridean deconstructionist mode of critical practice engages in the practice of *neutralizing* the binary, Luangpho Chah stretches on undoing the whole thing and going beyond it by mindfully defying reification of all mental formations, conditioned states and conventional linguistic signs be it the written word or the verbal utterance. Thus, in his dhamma talks the dismantling of binary oppositions occurs at various levels – linguistic/discursive, ontological and meditative.

Linguistic deconstruction

While Derridean deconstruction is purportedly logocentric, Luangpho Chah adheres to non-logocentricism through his defying of linguistic reification of conditioned states and terms that denote such states. In one of his dhamma talks he says, "You must go *beyond* all words, all symbols, all plans for your practice. Then you can see for yourself the truth arising right there. If you don't turn inward, you will never know reality."[19] This turning inward has nothing to do with aggrandizement of the individual ego, but rather its objectivization through the realization of its workings within the natural paradigmatic truth of existence – *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. The venerable ajahn has reiterated the message of empting the mind in most of his dhamma talks – "When you practice, observe yourself. Then gradually knowledge and vision will arise of themselves. If you sit in

[17] Jack Kornfield and Paul Breiter ed., *A Still Forest Pool – The Insight Meditation of Achaan Chah,* The Theosophical Publishing House, Illinois, 1985, p.34. All the sayings of Luangpho Chah quoted in this paper are taken from this book with emphases by the author. Subsequent reference will be made to the specific dhamma talk from the book with the corresponding page number.

[18] From the Dhamma Talk "The Simple Path", p.5.

[19] From the Dhamma Talk "Go Beyond Words: See for Yourself", p.10.

meditation and want it to be this way or that, you had better *stop* right there. Do not bring ideals or expectations to your practice. Take your studies, your opinions, and store them away."[20]

Therefore, Luangpho Chah urges his monastic and lay disciples to go beyond words and see and experience the process of deconstruction by oneself. He says, "If you are interested in Dhamma, just give up, just let go. Merely thinking about practice is like pouncing on the shadow and missing the substance. You need not study much. If you follow the basics and practice accordingly, you will see Dhamma for yourself. There must be more than merely hearing the words. Speak just with yourself, observe your own mind. If you cut off this verbal, thinking mind, you will have a true standard for judging. Otherwise, your understanding will not penetrate deeply. Practice in this way and the rest will follow"[21]. Through the challenge to cut off the verbal/thinking mind the issue of metaphysics-of- presence in rendered at once redundant. However, to any person not conversant or familiar with meditation practice the challenge is not only burdensome but would simply appear unthinkable.

Non-logocentricism gets provocative expressions in yet another of his powerful sayings – "When our innate wisdom, the one who knows, experiences the truth of the heart/mind, it will be clear that the mind is not our self. Not belonging to us, not I, not mine, all of it must be dropped. As to our learning the names of all the elements of mind and consciousness, the Buddha did not want us to become *attached* to the words. He just wanted us to see that all this as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and empty of self. He taught only to let go"[22].

Ontological deconstruction

The hierarchical order of binary structures tacitly promotes a first-term sequence (male/right/good) at the expense of a second-term sequence (female/left/evil) and has generally resulted in privileging of unity (albeit, superficially), identity, and temporal and spatial presence over diversity, difference, and deferment in space and time. Going against and beyond the general paradigm of polarized and dichotomous thinking Luangpho Chah's teachings focus on the truth that all things exists only in relation to each other not with any permanent or absolute intrinsic attribute. In his dhamma talk "The discriminating mind" he explains this graphically –"Right understanding ultimately means nondiscrimination – seeing all people as the same, neither good nor bad, neither clever nor foolish; not thinking that honey is sweet and good and some other food is bitter. Although you may eat several kinds of food, when you absorb and excrete them, they all become the same. Is it one or many? Is a glass big? In relation to a little cup, yes; when placed next to a pitcher, no. Our desire and ignorance, our discrimination *color* everything. This is the world we create. There are always differences. Get to know those differences, yet learn to see the sameness too. Learn to see the underlying sameness of all things, how they are all truly equal, truly empty. Then you can know how to deal with the apparent differences wisely. But do not get attached even to this sameness."[23]

Through ontological deconstruction Luangpho Chah aims to focus on the practice of identifying the source and mode of one's delusion. Delusion occurs through our failure to recognize

---

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., p.11.
[22] From the Dhamma Talk "Study and Experiencing", p.14.
[23] From the Dhamma Talk "The Discriminating Mind", p.34.

and accept the true nature of our ontological reality which is marked by conditioned states that are constantly changing and hence are marked by impermanence and non-substantiality. Luangpho Chah further attempts at problematizing the binary system prevalent in the ethical categories as well because none of these categories has its own essence to distinguish itself from its opposite; both good and evil exist through conditioned causality and thus are empty of essence. With emphatic focus on non-reification of provisional distinctions and categories Luangpho Chah made oppositions vanish or be transcended upon on recognition of it. His target is the deconstruction of notions of absolute distinction – "The Dharma is not out there, to be gained by a long voyage viewed through a telescope. It is right here, nearest to us, our true essence, our true self, no self. When we see this essence, there are no problems, no troubles. Good, bad, pleasure, pain, light, dark, self, other, are empty phenomena. If we come to know this essence, we die to our old sense of self and become truly free."[24]

Deconstruction of meditation

Buddhist deconstruction as put into practice by Luangpho Chah is not simply a strategic reversal of categories, it mindfully seeks to *undo* a given order of priorities and the very system of conceptual framework and discursive practice that makes that order possible. The identity of separate entities is subverted as entities are demonstrated to be inextricably involved the one in the other. Traditional interpretation places *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation as distinct phases, levels, stages or methods in formal meditation training, but in Luangpho Chah's interpretation the dichotomy collapses altogether giving way to interdependence and inextricable linking. When asked about the practice of meditation Luangpho Chah replied, "Meditation is like a single log of wood. Insight and investigation are one end of the log; calm and concentration are the other end. If you lift up the whole log, both sides come up at once. Which is concentration and which is insight? Just this mind. You cannot really separate concentration, inner tranquility, and insight. They are just as a mango that is first green and sour, then yellow and sweet, but not two different fruits. One grows into the other; without the first, we would never have the second. Such terms are only *conventions* for teaching. We should not be attached to the language."[25] Thus Luangpho Chah's form of deconstruction is more of an 'undoing' than a 'destruction', of polarized categorization and manifests itself in the careful teasing out of forces and layers of signification within a given text/context.

Luangpho Chah's kind of contemplative and rational understanding of meditation helps to deconstruct the actual act of meditation practice thereby removing from it any mark of fetishization. He says, "Peace is within oneself, to be found in the same place as agitation and suffering. It is not found in a forest or on a hilltop, nor is it given by a teacher. Where you experience suffering, you can also find freedom from suffering. To try to run away from suffering is actually to run toward it."[26] He thus emphasized not just formal meditation practice for the sake of it but on real meditation that has to do with attitude and awareness in any activity, not just with seeking silence in a forest cottage.

He emphatically points out that when the mind does not grasp or take a vested interest, does not get caught up, things become clear. Right understanding arises from the attempt at looking very

[24] From the Dhamma Talk "Underground Water", p.175.
[25] From the Dhamma Talk "Study and Experiencing", p.15.
[26] From the Dhamma Talk "Right Understanding", p.30.

objectively at a particular situation or event and understanding it as it-is-in-itself and not colouring it with our subjective views that arise from personal likes and dislikes. He clarifies this in one of his dhamma talks – "When you take a good look at it, the world of ours is just that much; it exists just as it is. Ruled by birth, aging, sickness, death, it is only that much. Great or little is only that much. The wheel of life and death is only that much. Then why are we still attached, caught up, not removed? Playing around with the objects of life gives us some enjoyment; yet this enjoyment is also just that much."[27]

Holistic well-being in Luangpho Chah's deconstruction

Luangpho Chah's kind of mindful deconstruction upholds a paradigm of holistic well-being which benefits the mind at the spiritual, psycho-cognitive and philosophical/contemplative level. At the ethico-spiritual level, the deconstructive approach trains the mind to free itself from defilements and all sorts of evil thoughts and unwholesome mental formations through the routine practice of cultivation of mindfulness focusing on the practice of *vipassanā* or insight meditation and ethical reflection. The rigorous training insists on recognizing the arising of defilements – greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*) – and discarding these defilements through the practice of mindfulness. As Luangpho Chah says, "The only way to reach an end in the practice of virtue is by making the mind pure."[28] With the constant mindful effort at recognizing defilements and then annihilating them, morality comes to be established on a firm attitudinal disposition that is marked by clarity of vision and understanding of the Law of Kamma i.e. resultant good or bad effects consequent on good or bad deeds. With unshakeable moral foundation the mind naturally matures to that level when it does not harbor negative emotions like feelings of jealousy, vindictiveness and revenge and so becomes calm, peaceful and non-confrontational. The non-confrontational disposition emerges because in its attempt to eradicate defilements the mind has already learnt to recognize and wage the internal war to vanquish such unwholesome states of mind like greed, hatred and delusion every time they arise.

At the psycho-cognitive level, the mind is enriched by the flow of positive emotions. The spiritual or moral maturity benefits the mind immensely at the psychological level as when in the absence of defilements the mind is enriched by various positive emotions such as contentment, love, fellow feeling, and self-reflexivity. The inner healthy state of mind is outwardly manifested in various positive behavioral patterns like happiness, gentleness in speech and bodily actions, non-aggressiveness, moral uprightness, concern for others, etc. With the influx of positive emotional states and mindful sustenance of them, the mind remains calm, peaceful and non-agitated and hence non-reactive to negative and adverse forces and unfavorable situations. When the mind is continually calm and peaceful it is innocuous and hence receptive to positive flow of mental energy that ultimately leads to infusion of inspirational joy in oneself and others alike. As Luangpho Chah says, "The point of all practice is to lead to freedom, to become one who knows the light all the time."[29]

At the contemplative level, the deconstructive approach enables the mind to arrive at the state of equanimity (*upekkhā*). The mind free from defilements and desires and established on

[27] From the Dhamma Talk "Just That Much", p. 43.
[28] From the Dhamma Talk "Rules Are Tools", p.114.
[29] Ibid.

virtues gradually acquires the state of equanimity as it proceeds to see clearly all sense impressions having a common nature – impermanent, unsatisfactory, and empty of self. When equanimity is maintained, the mind gradually recognizes the pernicious workings of the ego and can distance itself from it. With growing mental strength imbibed from the practice of insight meditation and reflective apprehension of the fleeting nature of all things and the truth of *anattā* or non-substantiality i.e. all phenomena are non-self, and that there is no real essence, soul, or self, the ego can be transcended for good. A balanced mind is one that is free from clinging to the ego. When the mind matures with the transcendence of the ego, the mental state moves to the state of egolessness and once this state is achieved the mind ceases to work within the dictates of binary oppositions. This is possible because the mind is trained to see through the process of thought construction and creation of illusions that arise from continuous clinging to various physical objects and mental formations, both wholesome and unwholesome. The mind that is habitually meditative and mindfully aware realizes that good or evil only arise in one's mind and so to be fully liberated one needs to step out of any such binaries. Transcending the binary oppositions the mind develops non-attachment to the ego, stimuli-driven pleasures or displeasures and all mental formations – spiritual, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, etc. The mind at this stage is tranquil and liberated with pure awareness and calmed of both elation and sorrow. This is when one realizes the Middle Path in one's practice. Luangpho Chah has pointed out, "The Buddha teaches us to keep laying down the extremes. This is the path of right practice, the path leading out of birth and becoming. On this path, there is neither pleasure nor pain, neither good nor evil. Our Path is straight, the path of tranquility and pure awareness, calmed of both elation and sorrow".[30]

A mind not enslaved by clinging is free from selfish desires and motives and as it realizes the true state of things as being subjected to constant change, suffering and selflessness, it gets infused with certain sublime states of mind such as loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. The mind's realization of the true nature of everything, including the human self in all its conditioned physical and mental states, as subject to repeated alterations and non-substantiality or selflessness, empties itself of egoistic self-fulfilling desires and selfish motives, and such an empty mind is the *tabula rasa* into which imprints of the sublime states of mind can get easily encoded without any exertion.

Benefits the world can reap from Buddhist deconstruction

The deconstructive message of non-substantiality and non-clinging so poignantly expressed in both Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and the dhamma talks of Luangpho Chah can serve as a panacea for the world steeped in the quagmire of growing discontentment. Both Nāgārjuna and Luangpho Chah have clearly demonstrated that when the mind does not grasp and is not caught up in the endless circles of desires and attachment, it leads to clarity of vision. The clear vision that can arise from non-attachment is badly lacking in our lives today. The different types of clinging that Buddhism identifies, such as: clinging to passions of the body, taste, smell, sound, sight, and other types of contact (*kāmupādāna*), clinging to views, such as opinions, doctrines and various theories (*ditthupādāna*), clinging to mere rules and rituals as the only true way (*sīlabbatupādāna*), and clinging to a self and mistakenly creating a self to cling to (*attavādupādāna*) have proliferated at a rapid scale, making people's lives centered upon extremely hedonistic and myopic concerns.

[30] From the Dhamma Talk "The Middle Way", p.7.

As a result, no matter how high and sophisticated living standards have come to be, life still remains dull at the conceptual level.

Not only the message of non-clinging but the lesson of deconstruction of the self/ego is useful to end linguistic bickerings, racial prejudices and religious disputes that have bred uncanny hatred, jealousy, vain pride, suspicion, contempt, subjugation and misuse of power among different groups of people. To sustain the reality of hybridity and multiculturalism that are characteristic traits of today's world of globalization, the deconstruction of the individual ego is indispensable. The experiences of colonialism and the two world wars have shown that vain pride in one's racial and cultural origins gives rise to hatred and contemptuous disregard for other cultures and people outside one's own community leading to untold miseries and pain and disruption of unity and harmonious co-existence. When the principle of deconstruction of the ego is put into real practice, it helps to replace parochialism and jingoistic tendencies with loving-kindness and compassion towards others and fosters a more receptive world view which is based on tolerance, impartiality, fairness and egalitarianism. With a kind and compassionate mental disposition one can learn to accept and celebrate differences among groups of people from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. While teaching his ordained disciples from various different countries and religious backgrounds Luangpho Chah emphasized, "For harmony with the group, we must give up pride and self-importance and attachment to fleeting pleasure. If you do not give up your likes and dislikes, you are not really making an effort."[31]

The type of mindfulness and deep understanding of non-substantiality that Nāgārjuna and Luangpho Chah have urged us to develop is required for our fight with ourselves, to distill our hearts from 'bad faith' and sterilize our minds from unwholesome desires so that we are not slavishly caught up in the nexus of me and mine, I and the other. Both through the cultivation of mindfulness and reflective internalization of non-substantiality or *anattā* a holistic world view can be developed. At the mundane level, Nāgārjuna and Luangpho Chah's emphasis on non-substantiality is indispensable to reduce hatred and deconstruct all conflictual categories and at the supra mundane level, reflective understanding of *anattā/sunyatta* in day to day life leads to blissful contemplation and makes life worth-living. As Luangpho Chah says, "Our lives are like the breath, like the growing and falling leaves. When we can really understand about falling leaves, we can sweep the paths every day and have great happiness in our lives on this changing earth"[32].

Conclusion

What we see in Nāgārjuna is the theoretical side of Buddhist deconstruction and in Luangpho Chah the practical side of it. Just as Nāgārjuna exposed through his logical propositions the emptiness of all phenomena including emptiness inherent in the very concept of *śūnyatā* itself, Luangpho Chah displayed great mastery in using the deconstructive mode of teaching through his emphasis on the practice of 'letting go' that led to non-reification of any absolute entity. As a logician Nāgārjuna's text-bound exposition of emptiness of all phenomena and noumena led to a critical assessment of many heretical interpretations that appeared in the Buddhist tradition, whereas as a meditation master Luangpho Chah's practice-oriented deconstructive teachings were directed to

[31] From the Dhamma Talk "Harmony With Others", p.119.
[32] From the Dhamma Talk "The Leaves Will Always Fall", p.104.

confronting and working directly with the individual's own problems of greed, judgment, hatred and ignorance. Luangpho Chah direct and simple teachings always turn his followers back to their own minds, the source and the root of all trouble. The ethical message of both Nāgārjuna and Luangpho Chah emphasized that true understanding of the concept of non-substantiality leads to understanding everything in life and nature as-it-is-in-itself. This understanding is not inaction and passive acceptance as some people might hastily conclude. Enlightenment does not mean deaf and blind. On the other hand, enlightened understanding leads to empirical deconstruction of the 'self' and the 'self-in-action'. Time and again Luangpho Chah emphasized on seeing through the process of thought construction so as to recognize from one's own experiential reality the fact that when the mind is stirred from the normal state of tranquility, it leads away from right practice to one of the extremes of indulgence or aversion, thereby creating more illusion, more thought construction. A true understanding of the nature of the mind helps people to free it from conventional reality and so the mind is not enslaved by codes, customs, traditions, conventions, linguistics choices, personal predilections. Once this state can be achieved all binary oppositions get automatically collapsed leading to no more creation of dichotomy/polarity and slavish clinging to its hierarchical chasm.

The contrite logical propositions of Nāgārjuna demonstrate theoretical and linguistic sophistication, whereas the dhamma talks of Luangpho Chah demonstrate down-to-earth profundity in practice that has arisen from moment-to-moment self-scrutiny and mindful practice of 'letting go'. In Luangpho Chah's form of empirical-deconstruction which involves conscientious and mindful teasing apart of all binary oppositions and releasing from their binding, there is no room for *aporia* or conflictual and conceptual hiatus. Although Luangpho Chah was not a philosopher in the conventional sense of the term, nevertheless, his numerous dhamma talks bear testimony to the fact that he incessantly worked within the matrix of a mode of practice that can be categorized as a practical-form-of-deconstruction. Such a mode of practice does not valorize the 'written' text alone as academically-oriented philosophers are likely to do, but renders the practice a moment-to-moment phenomenal and empirical garb through the rigorous practice of both insight meditation and material simplicity in tandem. It can be concluded that the 'deconstructive' tool through which Luangpho Chah had sought to dispose of all self/ego arising positions helped lead to a state of knowledge or wisdom (*paññā*) the cutting edge of which provide axiomatic guidelines for a holistic living.

References

Aniket Jaware, *Simplifications*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2001.

David J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna – The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1986.

Dipti Mahanta, 'The Isan forest meditation tradition: A praxis of mental well-being vis-à-vis global recovery', *UNDV Conference Volume* (Dion Peoples, ed.), Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, Bangkok, 2010.

J. Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995.

Jack Kornfield and Paul Breiter ed., *A Still Forest Pool – The Insight Meditation of Achaan Chah,* The Theosophical Publishing House, Illinois, 1985.

Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, tr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1976.

Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, tr. Alan Bass, Chicago University Press, 1981.

PA Payutto, *Buddhadhamma*, tr., Grant A. Olson, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1995.

W Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, Haw Trai Foundation, Bangkok, 1990.

The International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU)

Sponsored and Published by
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University